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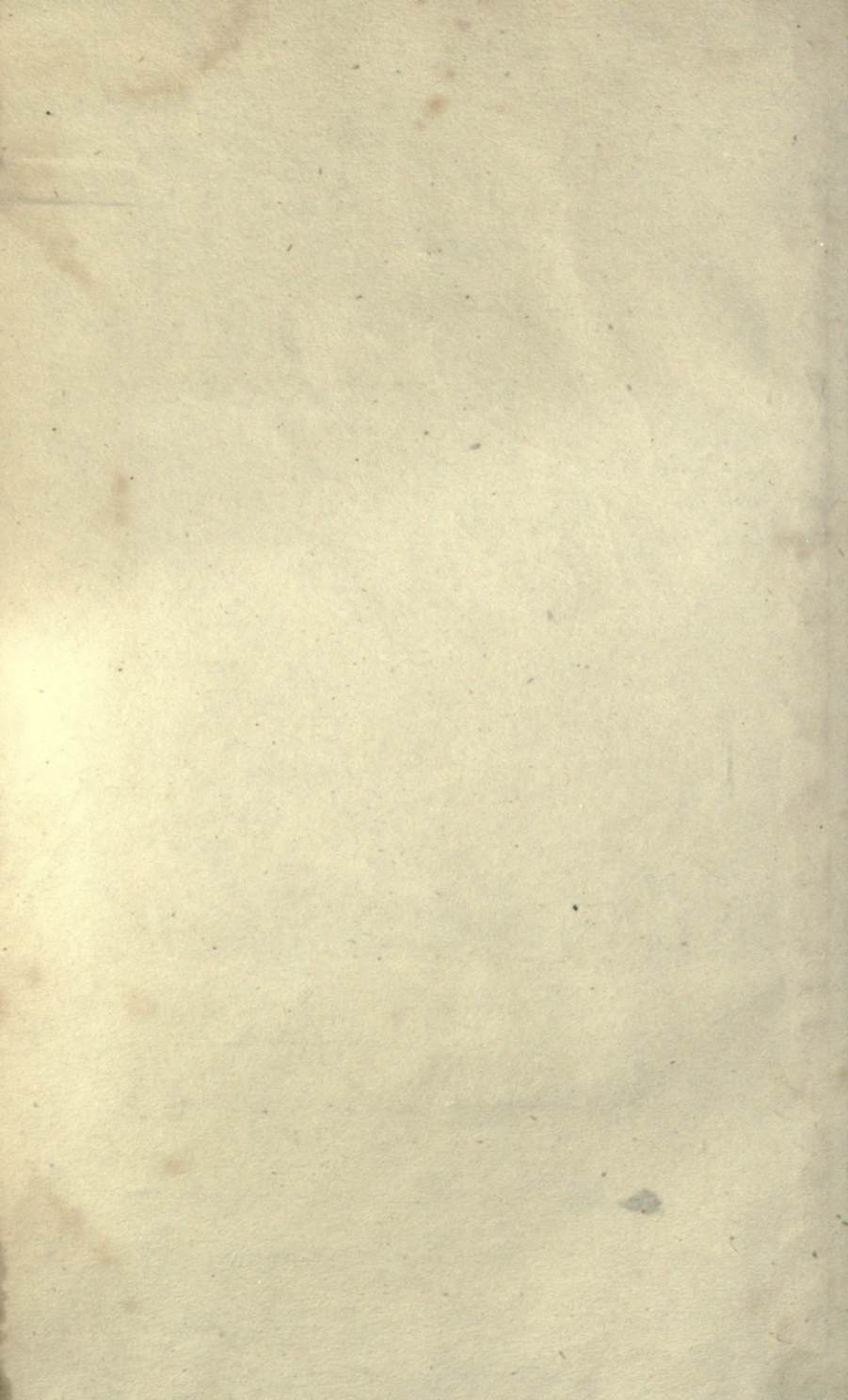
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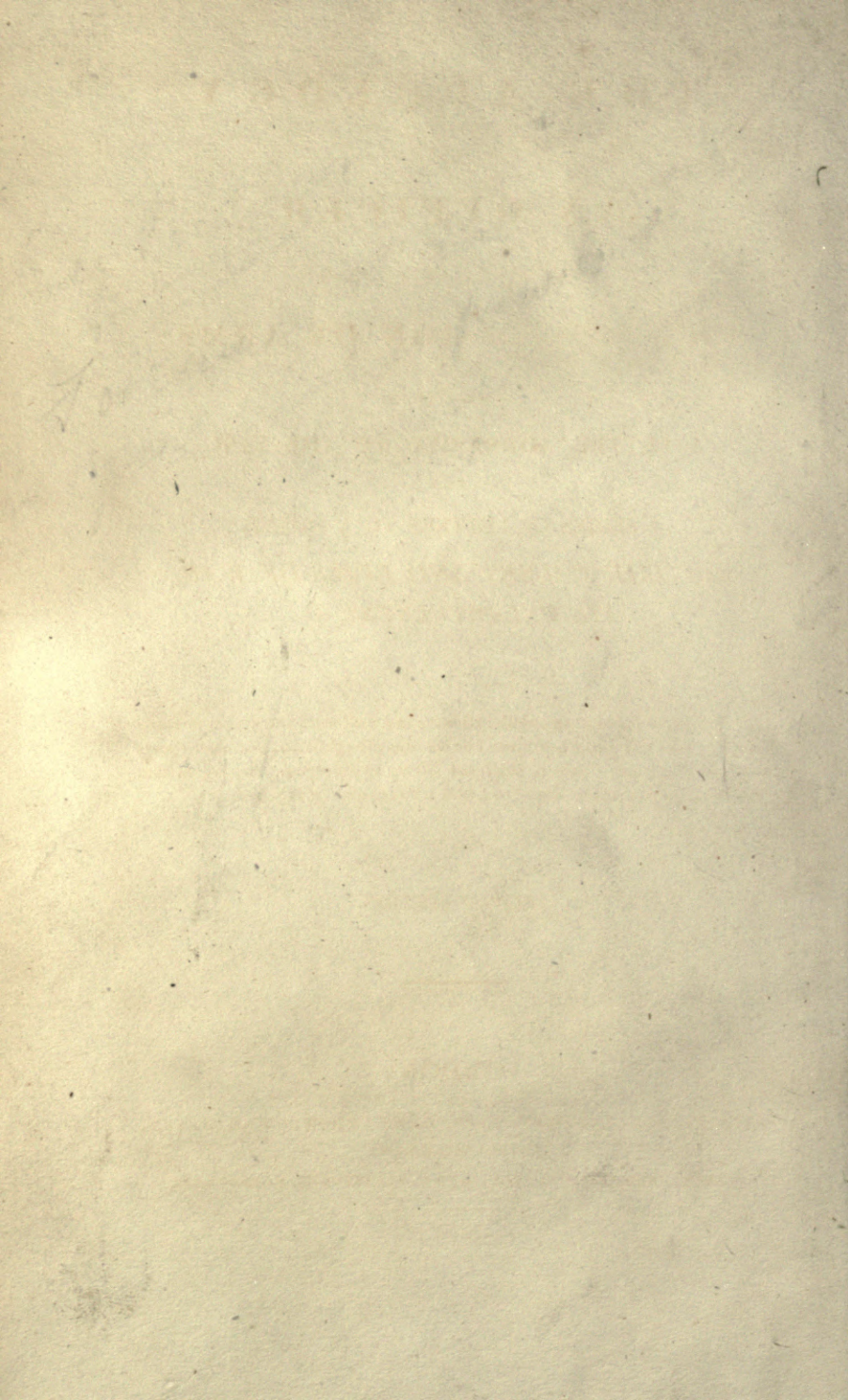
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THE APOLOGY  
OF  
AN OFFICER,  
FOR WITHDRAWING FROM  
THE PROFESSION OF ARMS:  
CONTAINED IN  
A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE KING;  
AND  
A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND,  
ON THE CAUSES AND EVILS OF WAR,  
ITS UNLAWFULNESS, &c

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“ And he shall judge among the nations, and shall work conviction in many peoples : and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—*Lowth's Translation of Isaiah*, ii. 4.

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SECOND EDITION.

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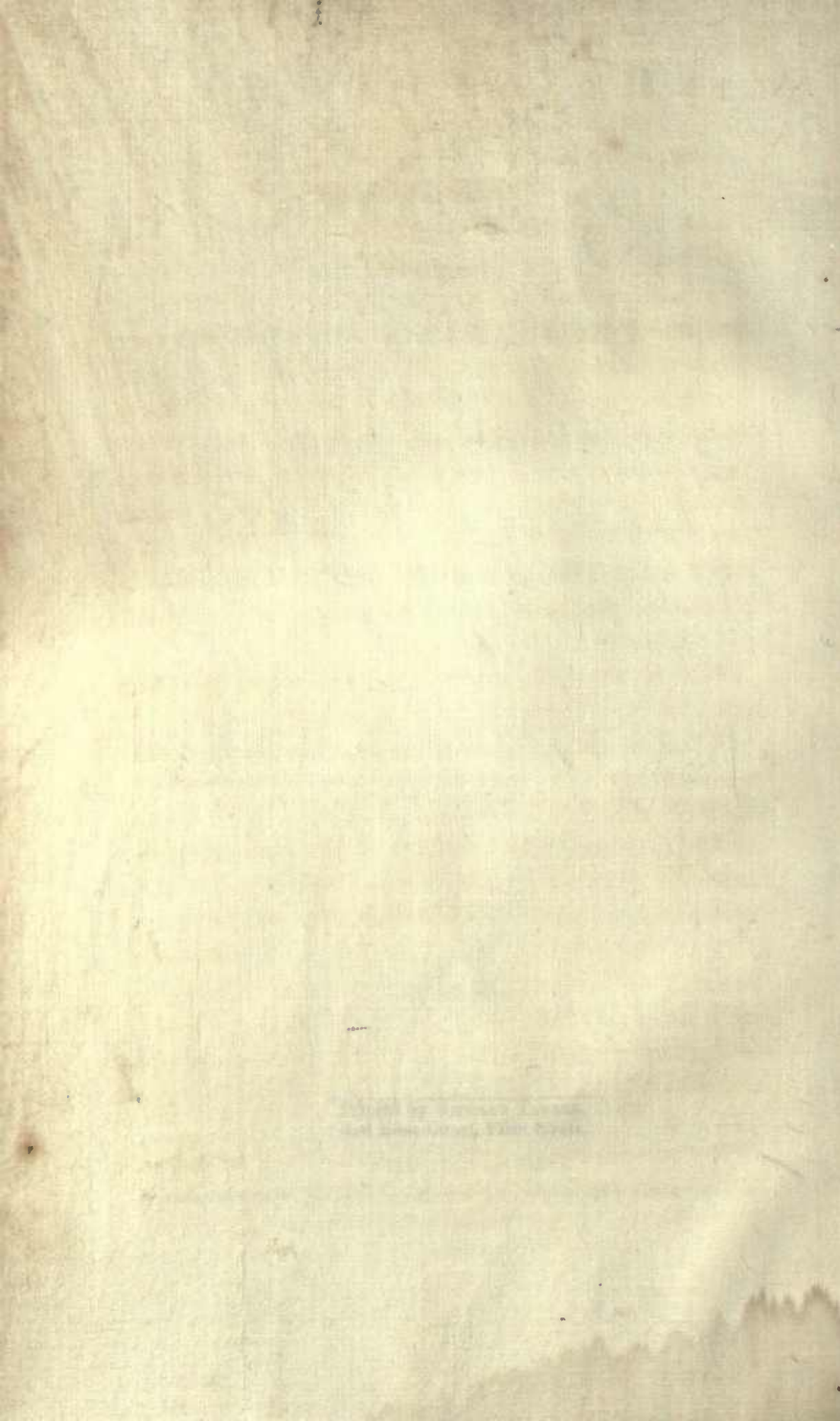
LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,  
PATERNOSTER-ROW:  
W. ALEXANDER AND SON, YORK ; AND R. BLACKBURN, HARROWGATE.

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1828.





## PREFACE.

DR. PALEY has justly observed that "no two things can be more contrary than the heroic and the Christian characters:" and, speaking of the former, he observes, "that it is; and ever has been, the favourite of the world." It is the character of great men. There is a dignity in it which commands respect. The latter is poor-spirited, tame, and abject: yet so it hath happened, that with the Founder of Christianity, this latter is the subject of his commendation, his precepts, his example; and the former is so in no part of its composition\*."

With equal truth it may be observed, that no two things can be more contrary than the pliant and selfish policy by which nations and individuals are generally governed, and the firm, noble, and disinterested conduct which is founded on implicit obedience to the precepts taught by Christ. It may be added, that the former is, and ever has been preferred. It is the character generally adopted by the great; and it recommends to their notice persons in the inferior ranks of society. There is in it a suavity of manners, a ready acquiescence in the opinions of those with whom we associate, calculated to conciliate their regard and affection. It is the step-ladder to wealth, to honour, and every thing this world can give. The latter promises little for this world, but much for the next.

The evils arising out of this departure from the require-

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\* See Paley's Evidences, Chap. II. On the Morality of the Gospel.

safely affirmed, that not one Christian in a thousand has bestowed a thought upon it. Most men regard this as a work of supererogation, and a kind of thing that does not personally concern them. Even amongst those who have taken upon themselves the sacred charge of instructing others, there are probably very few who have examined the Scriptures for the purpose of ascertaining their personal duties regarding war. To incite to inquiry on this subject, on grounds exclusively scriptural, is the main purport of the following Letters.

Whether this might have been accomplished by a much shorter work than the present, or whether, with advantage to the cause of "peace on earth," the work might have been extended to a much greater length,—the reader is left to decide. In forming his decision he is requested to bear in mind, that the publication of the following Letters is not only intended as a persuasive to the examination of the Scriptures, on a subject of high importance to society, but also designed as the author's Apology, which he now humbly submits to the public, to his brother officers, and also to his Sovereign, for an act which, as far as he knows, has no precedent in history for many centuries.

Believing that he is regarded by many as a visionary or an enthusiast, writing upon a subject which he has not duly investigated, the author has deemed it necessary to extend these Letters to their present length. If to be "zealously affected in a good thing" is enthusiasm, the author pleads guilty to the charge, and glories in it; but he denies that he is a visionary. So far from this, he feels confident that he has merely acted upon those principles which common sense dictates to those, who in earnest look forward to a state of future retribution, "when every one shall receive according to the deeds done in the flesh." That, in what he



has written, the author has not done justice to a most interesting subject; and that his Letters are defective in composition and arrangement, he is himself aware. For these, he trusts, his limited education and habits of life will be accepted as an excuse, by the candid searcher after truth.

The last three Letters are chiefly on the unlawfulness of defensive war. To these, particular attention is requested. If they contain any inconclusive reasoning, the author will thank any one to point it out to him. He believes the conclusions he has drawn from the highest authorities, to be perfectly legitimate; and, from the evidence these authorities afford, he decides that ALL WAR is unjustifiable to a professor of Christianity; and, consequently, that no believer in that religion can innocently engage in it, however disastrous to himself or others such a conduct might prove.

Should, however, the arguments here offered against defensive warfare be deemed weak or invalid, the author trusts that he will be held excusable for quitting the profession of arms, on the ground that he considers it as unlawful to a Christian to make that profession a trade to live by. And the reader is requested to bear in mind, that when the author first contemplated withdrawing from his profession, he regarded *defensive war* as lawful to a Christian.

As the main purport of these Letters is to ascertain the sense of Scripture, and its requirements on the subject of war, it has not been deemed necessary to do more than merely notice what has been said by Mr. Sheppard \* and others, concerning the inexpediency of the doctrine of non-resistance, and the political evils likely to result from its general adoption. The arguments in favour of this doctrine,

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\* See An Inquiry on the Duty of Christians respecting War, by J. Sheppard. Sold by T. Hamilton, Paternoster-row, London.

from the sacred pages of inspiration, the author hopes, will not be found unworthy of the attention of the critic, the scholar, and the divine. One thing may safely be affirmed, concerning the resistance of evil by armed force, which is, that it is a system that *does not work well*. The truth of this is attested by universal history, and by the present state of almost every nation in Europe. Whence proceed the accumulated evils under which all are now labouring? Are they not, in a great degree, owing to men preferring the heroic to the Christian character; the pliant and narrow policy of the present age, to the generous, independent, and benevolent spirit of the Gospel of Peace?

Though this policy is sanctioned by the authority of antiquity, yet the present taste is at variance with that of the most learned and polished nation among the ancients; and, in this respect, a doubt may be entertained whether ancient or *modern* Athens has the best claim to wisdom. "The Athenians," we are told, "spent their time in nothing else but to tell or to hear some *new* thing\*." The predominant taste of *modern* Athens is to tell or to read some *old* thing, and to search the dusty tomes of remote ages. That this may not only amuse, but instruct, cannot be denied; but it must, at the same time be admitted, that works of the kind alluded to, have a powerful tendency, by employing the mind on trifles, to repress the spirit of improvement, particularly of religious improvement; and, if not to restore the deeds of chivalry, to check the progress of Christianity (with which these works have little in common), and keep things *as they are*. That some of our most popular writers should, therefore, have honours conferred on them by statesmen, is in the natural course of things; for their writings may be consi-

The Series of Lectures was published in three parts, and at different times, the first to the King, was published some time before 1790.

\* Acts xvii. 21.



dered as convenient checks, or mounds, to prevent the too rapid progress of moral and intellectual improvement. They fix the attention of a large portion of mankind on what are called the *good olden times*, thus reconciling them to trivial pursuits, instead of exciting them, by the study of the sacred volume of inspiration, to look forward into futurity; to aim at higher virtues than military heroism and chivalry; and to prepare their minds for those times anticipated by the poet, when

“The lion, and the libbard, and the bear,  
Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon  
Together, or gambol in the shade  
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.”

COWPER.

Notwithstanding so little interest has been hitherto excited to the subject, the author has proceeded in publishing the Three Parts\* of his *Observations on the Causes and Evils of War, &c.* And, though writing under circumstances little encouraging, the employment has afforded him the conscious satisfaction of believing that he has been discharging his duty to his Maker, his Saviour, and his fellow-creatures; and he will add, to his King and country; for he feels the fullest conviction, that the endeavour to establish correct Christian principles is real patriotism, and that those principles form the best foundation for the permanent greatness of a nation, and the safest pillars for the throne.

Cheered by the “day-star of prophecy that shineth as in a dark place,” the author indulges a fervent hope that what he has written will be read with approbation, when the

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\* The Series of Letters was published in Three Parts, and at different times. The “Letter to the King” was published some time before them.



meek and patient courage of the Christian shall be held in higher honour than the dauntless intrepidity of the hero; when implicit obedience to Christ shall take place of the pliant and selfish policy of the world; when men, either from greater intensity of suffering occasioned by war, or from better understanding the spirit of the religion of Christ, or from a union of these causes, shall altogether abandon the profession of arms.

To suppose that these pages, disregarded by the critics of the present age of learning and investigation, will outlive their author, may appear to spring from vanity, rather than from the anticipations of a sound judgement. He should, indeed, consider himself as chargeable not only with vanity, but with excess of folly, were he to found his expectations of posthumous fame upon any imagined merit these Letters may possess. His hopes are founded on the *certainty* that a time will arrive, when the present delusions concerning war will be dispelled; a time when the nineteenth century, instead of being celebrated as a period distinguished for wisdom and benevolence, will have its merits and demerits duly appreciated. The philanthropist, who looks forward to an improved state of society, has the satisfaction of knowing, that inquirers concerning the subject of these pages have of late years greatly increased; and that Christians professing the most contrary creeds, and men of strong natural intellect and extensive knowledge, have been found in various countries, entertaining the same views as are advocated in these Letters.

Some may, and some already have censured the author for a departure, not only from patriotic, but also from Christian principles. To make such charges is easy; but not so to prove them. No one, whatever danger he may foresee in carrying into practice the principle which these Letters

advocate, will deny that in theory the principle itself is correct; viz. that the great Creator of the world is also its present King and Governor; and that it is the positive duty of every believer in the inspired volume of revelation, to examine the laws it establishes and the duties it imposes, and to aim at perfect obedience to them. If, in the present state of society, this is considered impracticable, it affords no mean presumption that a want of moral principle has placed modern nations in a similar dilemma to that in which Christianity placed the Jews: like the Jewish rulers, statesmen of the present day apprehend that if they adopt the Gospel of Peace, so far as to act upon it, that other nations "*will come and take away their place, and nation\**." Such a fear is inconsistent with Christian faith, that simple faith which teaches that "God is; and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This faith appears to possess little influence on the actions or councils of nations.

The present times, as they regard Britain, may be considered as critical in the extreme. We are burthened with a debt incurred by war, greater than the history of the whole world records; and instead of possessing the means of liquidating this debt, the wisest men are puzzled to devise the ways and means of discharging its interest, or of affording relief to a starving population. In this state, and all the nations of Europe armed and ready for battle, not only Britain, but all these nations, instead of being placed in security by their military defensive armaments, seem to have added to their danger, and to be living close to the crater of a volcano ready to overwhelm them. At such a period, surely Christians, and especially Christian princes and legi-

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\* John xi. 48.



slators, ought to pause and ask themselves the solemn question, "*Shall the sword devour for ever?*"

What will be the result of all these great military armaments, no human sagacity can discover. Poverty to a large portion of those for whom God has provided the means of comfort must be one certain consequence. As to Britain, it may be, that blessed, perhaps, with a larger portion of righteous men than other European nations, she may be permitted, by the goodness and forbearance of God, to continue a great and powerful nation; and this on the very principle that God would have spared the dwelling-place of Lot\*. It may be that, after having ceased to learn war, she may be made the honoured instrument of Providence in establishing, along with the Gospel of Peace, universal peace and security. But to expect this so long as she continues a great belligerent nation, is an expectation as vain, as to look for thorns producing grapes.

But, alas! the very reverse of this may happen; for of Britain it can hardly be said that she has been humble in prosperity, or faithful in improving the talents committed to her care. The sun of her glory may, therefore, be about to set, and, like other nations raised to greatness by the sword, she may by the sword be reduced to her original boundaries and comparative insignificance. Those who reckon with so much confidence on the rapid progress of knowledge, of the arts and sciences, of religion, and of the benefits likely to accrue from a union of these, may find themselves miserably deceived; and, instead of erecting new colleges, the ample revenues of those already in existence, and the treasures of a richly endowed church, may be seized upon by the rapa-

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\* Genesis xviii. 29.



cious hands of statesmen and soldiers maintained for the protection of these national institutions. Wisdom may contrive, and benevolence may execute plans for the amelioration of the human character, but a solid foundation is required to secure permanent good: "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is God that giveth the increase." Whatever benefits may be looked for by philanthropists from literary or scientific institutions, they must necessarily be transient in every belligerent nation; in every nation where the moral laws of God are not regarded as the rule of human actions. The writer of these pages, however, rejoices in the increase of knowledge, considering it as the certain means of exposing the folly, the irreligion, the cruelty of war. What the long-established institutions of education have done towards the establishment of "peace on earth," may be answered in one word,—**NOTHING.**

The sun of their glory may, indeed, be about to set to all the great European nations, and deprived of wealth and independence by war, the greatest of them may, at no very distant period, be reduced to the degraded state of modern Greece and Rome. Science, learning, religion, may (as they have hitherto done) travel westward; and nations only lately come into political existence, or perhaps yet in embryo, may be selected as the honoured instruments of establishing "peace on earth, and glory to God in the highest."

Not only statesmen but the clergy, protestant and catholic, have generally held out to mankind, that the object in going to war, is to establish true religion and universal peace. Nothing can be more visionary than such an expectation; and from this happy epoch we seem, alas, far removed. But, though the Almighty, in his wise system of governing the world, causes good to arise from evil; and though war, from the intensity of suffering it may inflict, should dispose the

minds of men to abandon it, yet Christianity is an uncompromising religion: it does not permit men to do evil that good may come; and its divine Author has plainly declared, that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. To expect, therefore, that peace will be (directly) established by the sword, seems to be about as reasonable as to expect that men in future ages will derive health and nourishment from what now constitutes poison. At a crisis like the present, when light is breaking in upon mankind, and when the ties by which society has been imperfectly kept together, during ages of darkness, seem to be dissolving, it appears to be the duty of all men, but more especially of statesmen and Christian ministers, to establish better ties of social union; and for this purpose seriously to examine the records of the Gospel of Peace, and to ascertain from thence the lawfulness or unlawfulness of war.

Should the following pages tend, in any degree, to produce this examination, and thus dispel the prejudices and delusions which have so long prevailed concerning war, the author will be consoled for the obloquy he has had to encounter, and he will have the satisfaction of thinking that he has not lived in vain.

*Belle Vue, Harrowgate, Aug. 1828.*

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# A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

## THE KING,

By THOMAS THRUSH,

ON RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION AS A CAPTAIN IN THE  
ROYAL NAVY, ON THE GROUND OF THE  
UNLAWFULNESS OF WAR.

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*THE FOURTH EDITION.*

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“ I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”

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SIRE,

WHEN a subject presumes publicly to address his sovereign, on a matter which he deems of the very highest importance to the welfare and happiness of mankind, he cannot, if his motives are pure, help feeling much anxiety to acquit himself in a way that may best promote his views ; that may give no offence to the sovereign he addresses ; and that may, as much as possible, disarm public censure.

This, Sire, is my case : and when I inform Your Majesty that the purport of this letter is to announce my resignation of the commission and rank I hold

in Your Majesty's Naval Service, from a conviction that my retaining them is incompatible with my Christian profession, it will be obvious that my situation, if not one of great difficulty, is, at least, one of peculiar delicacy. It will be equally obvious that it is no easy matter for me to avoid giving offence, or to escape censure.

The difficulties of my situation are increased by the consideration that I have no precedent for my guidance, either as to the letter I am addressing to Your Majesty, or to the important and unusual act to which this letter relates. In both cases I am acting, and I feel the weighty responsibility, solely on my own judgement, and without the aid of precedent or example. This consideration ought to make me both humble and circumspect ; that I may neither do nor say any thing of which I may hereafter see just cause to repent. I trust, Sire, this will not be my case ; for on the subject of these pages I have not thought lightly or casually, but seriously and intensely ; and this not merely during a week, a month, or even a year, but almost daily for the last three years. After endeavouring to gain the best information on a subject continually becoming more interesting to me ; and after imploring the guidance of that Being who alone can direct the hearts of men to what is right ; my scruples concerning the accordancy of the military profession with the precepts of the Christian religion have ended in the conviction, that the duties of this profession are



altogether irreconcilable with the plain fundamental principles of our holy religion.

Considering the subject-matter of this letter, and the profession of its writer, it might be deemed more respectful to Your Majesty, as well as to the distinguished persons who compose the Board of Admiralty, that I should, according to professional etiquette, address myself to them, through their Secretary. After due consideration, it appears necessary for me, on the present occasion, to depart from this custom. Whether, Sire, I regard Your Majesty as the fountain of military rank and honour, or as the Supreme Head of the Church of Christ in the nation you govern, but more especially as the latter, I feel it to be my duty to address these pages to Your Majesty; and I trust that my boldness, in doing so, will not be considered as a departure from Christian humility, or from the deference and duty justly required from a subject to his sovereign.

When a man, by many years of assiduity and active exertion, has gained a highly respectable rank in his profession; when, indeed, he has nearly arrived at the goal of his wishes,—it may be expected that he will thankfully enjoy this rank, and its emoluments. But when, instead of doing so, he, in advanced life, resigns these, he is likely to be taxed with something beyond mere imbecility,—the remark of Festus to St. Paul will scarcely be thought too severe for a person acting thus at variance with common feelings and practice. As this remark may

possibly be applied to me ; I hope, though I have no pretensions to the learning of the Apostle, that I may be permitted to answer in his words, that “ I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”

To account for a conduct so perfectly strange and unusual, is a duty I owe to Your Majesty : but before I proceed to discharge this duty, it may be proper to examine how far I may lawfully, under any circumstances, withdraw myself from my profession.

In whatever light I regard my half-pay, I am duly sensible that my engagement to Your Majesty and my country is one of a very sacred nature, and that I ought to be able to adduce weighty and satisfactory reasons for the step I am taking. I cannot be ignorant that such a line of conduct, if generally adopted, would produce very important consequences to society in all nations : I therefore feel it, not only an imperative duty to Your Majesty, to my brother-officers, and to the world at large, but also a most sacred duty to my Maker, that I should, with the greatest plainness, state my reasons, or rather my apology, for a proceeding which, as far as I know, is in modern times unprecedented. In doing this, it will be my most anxious wish and endeavour to observe that deference and profound respect justly due to Your Majesty's person, and to the elevated and important station you fill. Should I fail in doing this, I entreat you, Sire,

to believe that my failure does not arise from a wish to withhold from Your Majesty the honour justly due to you ; but from an overpowering anxiety to “ render unto God the things that are God’s.”

Although, Sire, I feel the fullest conviction that the case I am going, hypothetically, to state, could not under any circumstances happen to me ; yet permit me to suppose, though living under your protection, that I should so far forget my obligations and my allegiance to Your Majesty as to unite myself to your enemies. Were I, by any possibility, implicated in a transaction so truly degrading, I should consider it as my first duty, as soon as I became sensible of the enormity of my crime, to make the most ample and the most public reparation for it. Though my doing so might subject me to the charge of cowardice and treachery ; yet, unquestionably, it would be my bounden duty to retrace my steps and return to my allegiance to you, my lawful sovereign ; and it would be equally my duty to do this in the most public manner.

In some points my own real situation appears to me very similar to the imaginary case I have here stated. With much zeal and sincerity I entered into the Naval Service of Your Majesty’s revered Father, and swore allegiance to him. This allegiance is now, of course, due to Your Majesty, as his lawful successor. When I entered into this solemn contract, I entertained no apprehension that I was acting in opposition to the principles of the



Christian religion ; nor did any apprehension of this kind ever arise in my mind during the time I was actively employed in the service of my country. Nay, so far from suspecting that I was departing from Christian rectitude, it appeared to me almost certain, if I should lose my life in the service of my king and my country, that this would serve as a kind of passport to the favour and acceptance of God. This opinion, which has been frequently inculcated by ministers of the Gospel of Peace, as well as by pagan writers, is, I believe, generally entertained by those who think at all when they enter the naval or military profession.

Those, Sire, who live much in the world are imperceptibly led to think, and act, upon the principles of those with whom they associate. Though, in the busy scenes of naval service, I never entertained an idea of my profession being irreconcilable with the religion of Christ ; yet, after passing several years in a retirement bordering on seclusion ; and after more closely inspecting the Christian precepts, and reviewing my past life, it appears to me that while I have been serving my king and my country, if not brilliantly, yet faithfully, I have been acting in open disobedience to the plain and positive commands of another and a superior Master,—a Master whose claims upon my allegiance are prior, and paramount, to those of Your Majesty, or of any earthly sovereign.

Christianity being considered as a part of the

laws of the land, it would seem reasonable to conclude, that so long as a subject obeys the precepts of the divine Founder of this religion, he can hardly fail in any important duty to his sovereign. In other words, if a subject is careful to "render unto God, the things that are God's," it will be hardly possible for him to withhold from his sovereign those things that are lawfully due to him. In Christianity, one duty implies the other; and thus the duty to the Prince is placed upon the most solid foundation, as forming an essential part of a Christian's duty to God. But, Sire, permit me with great deference and respect to observe, that the claims of any earthly sovereign, parent, or benefactor, to our gratitude, our love, and our obedience, ought not for a moment to be put in competition with those of our Maker. And it is, Sire, not only our bounden duty, but also our highest interest, to render unconditional and absolute obedience to God alone.

During the latter part of those years of retirement which I have mentioned, this and other Christian truths have become strongly impressed on my mind; and conscience has told me, that, however honourable my profession may be considered, it is impossible for a man to be at the same time a faithful follower of Christ and a warrior by profession. The moment a man sells himself to his sovereign, or to his country, for the purpose of human destruction, he loses *caste* (if I may be allowed the

expression) as a Christian. He forfeits that liberty, that freedom to think, to speak, and to act, on moral and religious principles, which, as a Christian, it is his privilege, as well as his duty, to maintain.

If a subject may be permitted to make the remark, Your Majesty appears to entertain opinions similar to these. In confirming the sentence of a Court Martial held on a foreign station on two officers for disobedience of orders, Your Majesty most justly observes that, "IF RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES WERE ALLOWED TO BE URGED BY INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS AS A PLEA FOR DISOBEDIENCE OF ORDERS, THE DISCIPLINE OF THE ARMY WOULD SUSTAIN AN INJURY WHICH MIGHT BE DANGEROUS TO THE STATE." Surely, Sire, this is equivalent to saying that men who are imbued with RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES, or Christians, are unfit for the military service. Of the justice of Your Majesty's remark, or of the equity of the sentence of the Court, no one conversant in military discipline can entertain a doubt. Thinking men, who believe that their professional duty interferes with their duty to God, ought not to halt between two opinions.

Since I have been led to the examination of the foregoing opinions, my convictions from reflection and from reading, especially from reading the Holy Scriptures, have become established. Indeed there is scarcely a chapter in the New Testament that does not virtually condemn war,—scarcely a command, or a precept, to which a professed warrior



can pay unconditional obedience. I therefore, Sire, as a Christian, looking forward to existence beyond the grave, feel myself compelled to resign, and lay at your Majesty's feet, that commission in your Naval Service, which I laboured with diligence and fidelity to attain ; and on which, when attained, no one placed a higher value than myself. I see no alternative, Sire, between doing this and relinquishing those glorious hopes of immortality which our Saviour holds out to those, and to those only, who obey his precepts.

In camps and fleets, and in the busy scenes of public life, the awful threats and the cheering hopes of the Gospel do not receive the serious consideration they deserve. Withdrawn from those scenes, my mind has become more and more impressed with the clearest conviction, that for men to devote themselves to the military profession, and to assemble by thousands for the avowed purpose of deliberately shedding human blood, is as clearly contrary to the plain and positive precepts of Jesus, as it is abhorrent to those natural feelings of humanity that, till blunted or perverted by education, are in mercy impressed on our hearts by our wise and benevolent Creator. Entertaining these opinions ; believing that they will be approved by my future Judge ; and, as a Christian, determined never to draw a sword, or pull a trigger, for the purpose of shedding human blood ; nor yet to return a blow for a blow, or an insult for an insult ; I feel myself perfectly unfit for

Your Majesty's Naval Service, and I think I should not act either honestly or consistently, in retaining my commission.

I am aware, Sire, that the step I have taken might, in times less liberal and enlightened, have subjected me to severe pains and penalties. I am thankful that I live in times when the Christian religion is not only better understood, but when it is considered as forming an essential part of the laws of the most powerful and civilised nations; and I feel much confidence that Your Majesty, though you may condemn the step I have taken, will approve the motive by which it has been dictated. Were the subjects of Your Majesty, and of other sovereigns, to act generally on the principle I have adopted, though some local and temporary inconvenience might be the result, extensive and permanent good must be the consummation: nor is it probable that universal peace will ever be established on any other basis than unconditional obedience to the precepts of Jesus.

Suppose, Sire, that instead of Your Majesty's subjects adopting this pacific system, the French, whom, alas! contrary to the fundamental principles of our religion, we have been trained to regard as our natural enemies,—Suppose, Sire, that they should set the glorious example to the world, and “beat their swords into plough-shares:” would Your Majesty, or would your subjects, or would other nations, regard this as a misfortune? In-

stead of thus considering it, would it not be hailed by all as a most auspicious event? And, instead of thereby subjecting themselves to insult, would they not command the admiration, the esteem, and the friendship, of every civilised, and even of every savage nation? May it henceforth, Sire, be the ambition of Britain and France, to set to other nations the glorious example of cultivating a Christian instead of a martial spirit.

In withdrawing myself from Your Majesty's Naval Service, I have the consolation of doing it in a time of profound peace, when the least possible objection can be made to such a measure. It is also less repugnant to my feelings to retire from half-pay than from actual service. This pay, I have been led to believe, is not only considered as a reward for past services, but also as a retaining fee for future exertions. Being unwilling to comply with the terms, I feel that I am not entitled to the fee; and that I ought not to receive it. Did I, on the other hand, regard my half-pay as exclusively a reward for past services; having earned it by what I now consider as a transgression of Christian duty, or as a desertion of my allegiance to God, it appears to me, in receiving it, that I virtually renew, or continue, my disobedience. If I may be allowed to apply to myself the figurative and emphatical language of St. Paul, "I crucify afresh the Lord Jesus Christ," (THE PRINCE OF PEACE,) "and put him and his religion to an open shame."



To enumerate only a few of the evils emanating from war would swell this letter far beyond the limits to which it is my wish to confine it. Of war it may safely be affirmed that, if it does not cause, it aggravates every evil, moral or political, by which mankind is assailed. In the Old Testament, war, or the sword, is uniformly spoken of as the instrument whereby God punishes rebellious and idolatrous nations. This ought to be regarded as a warning voice from Heaven, both to nations and individuals, not to engage in it.

I might here, Sire, lay down my pen, trusting that in a situation of considerable difficulty I have acted (at least according to the best of my judgement) on correct Christian principles. It seems necessary, however, upon an occasion like the present, that I should endeavour to prove that I have acted on these principles.

The prophecies of the Old Testament, when taken in connexion with the precepts of the Gospel, appear decisive against the practice of war, under the Christian dispensation. To this evidence I appeal with the more satisfaction, as it affords, at the same time, the pleasing and sure testimony, that the degrading and sanguinary scenes of past and present times are not to endure, but, on the contrary, that they will be succeeded by ages of permanent peace and happiness.

I am not, Sire, so great a visionary as to expect that the example of any individual, much less of one

so little known to the world as myself, will have the least influence with others ; yet I confidently anticipate that a time will arrive, when not only insulated individuals, but when men in great numbers, —when *the nations*,—when *many people*\* will act on the same principles that I have done. I do not entertain this belief, merely because I think the divine precepts of the Christian religion are admirably calculated to produce so glorious an event, or because the “signs of the times” lead reflecting persons to expect it ; but chiefly because I am a believer in those prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of this devoutly to be wished for event as a certainty. These prophecies give evidence concerning this triumph of Christianity, with as much precision and clearness as they testify the truth of Christianity itself. Their accomplishment, indeed, seems to form a necessary connecting link in the grand chain of the prophecies concerning Christianity : this link wanting, the fortress of Christian truth is rendered assailable, and is exposed to the attacks of Jews and sceptics, who taunt Christians with the remark that their religion cannot be true, inasmuch as **THE PRINCE OF PEACE** is not yet come into the world. As it was, Sire, the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles to appeal to the prophecies of the Old Testament, it seems wise that Christians of the present day, in examining

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\* Isaiah ii. 4.

a disputed point, such as the lawfulness of war, should follow the example of these infallible guides.

However acute and excellent the writings of many learned commentators on the Prophecies, and however decisive the proofs they draw from them of the truth of the Christian revelation, it would seem certain that some of the most important of these prophecies, generally applied to Christianity, are at variance with all history, whether civil or ecclesiastical, of the last fourteen or fifteen centuries. The following prophecies are of this description :

I. Isaiah ii. 2. *And it shall come to pass, in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountain and shall be exalted above the hills, and all the nations shall flow unto it.*

3. *And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

4. *And he will judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.—See also Micah iv. 1—4.*

II. Isaiah xi. 1. *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse.*



5. *Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.*

6. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them.*

7. *And the cow and the bear shall feed : and their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

8. *And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.*

9. *They shall not hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

These prophecies, though couched in language so very dissimilar, are no doubt descriptive of the same event, viz., the great happiness destined for mankind through the medium of the Christian religion. This happiness many of the virtuous, the enlightened, and the philanthropic, in all ages since the Christian era, have ardently, but vainly, wished to see realised. The former prophecy describes this triumph of Christianity in terms so plain and literal, that they cannot be misunderstood. The latter, though couched in symbolical language, is also descriptive of a state of great happiness under the Christian dispensation. In two important particulars these prophecies remain yet to be fulfilled, viz.: in establishing peace in the world ; and in

spreading *that knowledge of the Lord* which is finally to produce this blessed effect.

Should it be asked, Sire, of what use these prophecies are to Christians of the present day,—are they recorded merely to gratify a prying curiosity, and to convey to them information concerning events which are to take place at some future and indefinite period, and in which they have no interest or concern? This question is answered by St. Paul; that prophecy (like other parts of Scripture) is “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” These prophecies, therefore, are handed down to inform us that it is the will of the great and benevolent Parent of mankind, and consequently the duty of Christians, to live together in harmony and love, instead of hating and destroying each other by war.—They are written to show us that if wars now exist, the fault is not in Christianity, but in those who are called Christians.—They are written to tell us what effects real Christianity *will* produce hereafter, and consequently what it ought to produce now.—They are written, Sire, to admonish Christians to refrain from war. These prophecies are still more important, for they point out the way to put an end to war; viz., by spreading abroad Christianity (or “the knowledge of the Lord”) till “it shall cover the earth.” When Christians cease from war, this undertaking will become comparatively an easy task. Thus understood and applied, these pro-

phesies, instead of being a mere dead letter and a matter of useless speculation, become practically and individually useful; they become, like other parts of Scripture, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

It is well, Sire, for Christians who feel a deep interest for the honour of their religion, that the history of the first two centuries establishes the fact that the professors of Christianity, in those early ages, refrained from war. It is also well for the cause of Christianity that an apostasy from the faith was predicted. In Scripture language, faith and Christian practice are often synonymous; and it is impossible to conceive a greater departure from Christian practice than war. Thus, Sire, this departure from the practice of the Apostles and early Christians, like every other fact connected with the Christian history, when duly considered, bears testimony to its truth.

So long as nations professing Christianity shall make a trade of war, the superstructure of Christianity must and will be assailable through these prophecies: but its foundations are imperishable. When Christians shall cease from war, which, on the sure word of prophecy, they will do; then may we hope that Christianity "will cover the earth," and that "all the kingdoms of this world *will* become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Till



then, warriors must be considered as the foes of Christianity.

If, Sire, we ask ourselves the question—what changes would be effected in the moral and political world, if our Lord's sermon on the mount, instead of being a subject of occasional eulogium and admiration, were made the standard rule of men's actions? Let the prophet Isaiah answer the question: men would "beat their swords into ploughshares," and "nation would not lift up sword against nation, neither would they learn war any more." The all-powerful cause that is to produce these glorious effects is Christianity. Connecting it with the prophecies of the Old Testament, we may consider "the knowledge of the Lord," and Christian knowledge, as the same thing; and taking the sermon of our Lord on the mount as a summary of this knowledge, we may consider it as the noble instrument that is finally to produce these glorious effects.

The close agreement, Sire, between these prophecies and the probable result of our Saviour's precepts, if practically embraced, affords a strong presumptive proof, that both the prophecies and the precepts are of divine origin. I have, I trust, shown that the former never can be fulfilled so long as Christians shall engage in war. It will be equally easy to show that the precepts of the Gospel can never be complied with by nations or by indivi-

duals' engaging in war. Their obedience to such precepts and commands as the following seems to be an impossibility.

*Have peace one with another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

*Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love.*

*Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another : love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.*

*Be at peace among yourselves. See that none render evil for evil to any man. God hath called us to peace.*

*Follow after love, patience, meekness. Be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. Live in peace.*

*Lay aside all malice. Put off anger, wrath, malice. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.*

*Avenge not yourselves. If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Overcome evil with good.*

What a strange anomaly, Sire, would be exhibited, were these truly noble and characteristic precepts of the Christian religion placed at the head of every naval or military officer's commission, and at the head of every warlike order issued from the Admiralty or War-office, or at the head of every regimental orderly-book ! No incongruity could

appear greater than such a mixture of war and Gospel—no impossibility more evident than the impossibility of obedience in both cases—no truth more clear than that war and Christianity are utterly irreconcilable. When the Christian and military duties are thus contrasted, the discrepancy is so glaring, that it has rather the appearance of burlesque than of sober truth. But surely this striking contrariety affords no mean argument that the duties of a Christian and a warrior can never be faithfully discharged by the same individual.

A due consideration of these truly Christian precepts will show us the fallacy of one of the most popular arguments in favour of war : viz., that as the Jews, the highly-favoured people of God, were commanded, by God himself, to wage war, it cannot therefore be sinful for Christians to do the same. But our Saviour has left his followers without this excuse ; for he tells them they are not to be guided by the customs of the Jews : “ Ye have heard,” says he, “ that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”—“ Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : but I say unto you, love them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” The practice of the Jews, therefore, Sire, can be no excuse for Christians to engage in war.



Another popular argument in favour of war is, that the moral precepts of the Gospel, though imperative to individuals, may, in cases of necessity, be dispensed with by sovereigns, or nations. On this subject an acute reasoner thus expresses himself: "In the transactions of private persons, no advantage that results from the breach of a general law of justice, can compensate to the public for the violation of the law; *in the concerns of empire this may sometimes be doubted.*" I deeply regret, Sire, that a sentiment so derogatory to Christian morals should have proceeded from the pen of Dr. Paley. My regret, however, is softened by the knowledge that Christian sovereigns united in Holy Alliance "have not so learned Christ." These sovereigns solemnly declare "*their fixed resolution, both in the administration of their respective states, and in their political relations with every other government, to take for their SOLE guide the precepts of that holy religion*" (the Christian): "*namely, the precepts of justice, Christian charity, and peace, which, far from being applicable only to private concerns, must have an immediate influence on the counsels of princes, and guide all their steps, as being the ONLY means of consolidating human institutions and remedying their imperfections.*" Whenever Christian nations shall act on these principles, wars among them will cease, and "the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Considering the high importance of the subject-matter of these pages to myself individually, I trust, Sire, that I shall not, in concluding them, be accused of egotism, or of improperly indulging my own feelings or vanity, in stating the following particulars concerning myself.

When the first impressions, Sire, were formed in my mind concerning the unlawfulness of Christians entering into or remaining in the military profession, I cannot exactly recollect. To my shame, I may, I believe, say that I never thought seriously on the subject till within the last four years. Whenever I heard feelings of disapprobation expressed concerning war, I was led to regard them, as Bishop Horsley did, as a species of puritanical cant; so fully was I satisfied that war, and consequently my profession, was perfectly consonant with the precepts of Christianity. About the time I have mentioned, owing to circumstances which I need not state, I began to entertain doubts on this subject. These doubts gradually gained strength; and early in the year 1822 I came to the resolution to investigate the subject more closely than I had hitherto done; and if, after such investigation, it should appear to me that my profession was irreconcilable with the precepts of Christ, I determined to resign my naval rank and half-pay, although I placed a high value upon the former, and the latter forms a large portion of a very limited income; and I was thereby subjecting myself, and not myself

alone, to a very considerable change in my mode of living, and this at an advanced period of life, when its comforts and conveniences are most wanted.

To take a step so highly important to me in many points of view, but particularly in a religious one, upon the first impression of my mind, would have been highly improper; for even the best informed persons frequently change their opinions, and see the same transaction in different points of view at different periods of time. From the very novel nature of the act I contemplated, I thought it possible that this might happen to myself; and that, in my ardour to do what I deemed an act of religious duty, I might hastily take a step of which I might hereafter see just cause to repent, and when repentance could not avail me. I was also aware, that what I proposed doing, being so much at variance with established custom, might be attributed to vanity, or an affectation of singularity—motives by which, as far as I know myself, I have never been greatly influenced. Added to these considerations, I felt much difficulty as to the manner in which I should withdraw myself from my profession. It appeared to me, (though it may savour of vanity thus to express myself,) that the measure I contemplated was one of very great importance both in a political and religious point of view.

Under these perplexing circumstances, I came to the resolution to retain my half-pay three years longer, should my life be so long spared, and to de-



dedicate that time to serious inquiry on a subject constantly pressing upon my mind. This delay I considered as likely to cure me of any false notions that either ignorance, fanaticism, or vanity might generate. It has, Sire, pleased the divine Disposer of events to grant me these years ; and I hope they have not been passed unprofitably. After every inquiry and consideration on one of the most important subjects that can occupy the human mind, as far as my abilities and opportunities have enabled me, and after frequent and earnest prayer to that Being who alone has power over the minds of men, that I might do nothing dishonourable to Christianity nor injurious to society, I have seen no reason to regret the resolution I then formed. Some may blame me, and with seeming justice, for taking so long a time for consideration, on what I now speak of as so very clear a point. I do not however regret this delay, as it has effectually convinced me that I have acted not only from pure motives, but also on correct principles ; and I feel the fullest confidence that I shall never repent of the step that conscience has dictated. This delay has also enabled me to correct the false views I have entertained till within the last twelve months concerning what is called *defensive war*. On this subject I have, indeed, changed my opinions.

When I first formed the resolution of withdrawing from the naval profession, I was, Sire, impressed with an idea, perhaps rather a confused one,

that though wars of conquest and aggression were clearly unjustifiable and wicked, yet that wars of defence were not so. For individuals or nations to engage in these, I considered as not merely lawful, but as highly honourable and meritorious. However I may subject myself to scorn and contempt, I now feel no hesitation in declaring my conviction, that warfare of any kind, offensive or defensive, national or individual, is most plainly interdicted by the spirit, if not by the letter, of the Gospel. It is absolutely irreconcilable with the characteristic precepts of Christianity, as well as with the prophecies which I have already quoted. These precepts and prophecies teach us that to obey the will of God is "the whole business of morality." I may be under a delusion; but regarding war of any kind as incompatible with this obedience, I must either reject as sophisticated the excuses and apologies of learned and ingenious men in favour of defensive war, or set at nought both the Gospel and the prophecies.

Politicians consider the being ready for war as the surest mean of avoiding it, and as a proof of true wisdom. This is mere assertion : and history and experience admonish us, that if one nation arms by way of precaution and self-defence, another and another will do the same ; and these defensive armaments, it is more than probable, will produce offensive operations. Defensive armaments may secure temporary safety, but they are calculated to create jealousy and provoke hostility, and to verify

the remark of him who "spake as never man spake;" viz, that "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." We are told on the sure testimony of prophecy that wars will cease; but we have not the slightest intimation that this will be effected by defensive armaments: on the contrary, we have abundant reason to believe that the spread of Christianity (or "the knowledge of the Lord,") will produce this. (*Isaiah xi. 9.*)

A meek and an unresisting spirit seems to be the key-stone of Christianity: it appears to be regarded by our Saviour as a kind of celestial panoply, not merely securing to its possessor the approbation of God, but also protecting him from wrong and insult. The same remark may be applied to families, and also to nations. Its effects with these latter, it is true, remain to be fully tried; but in, I believe, the only instance in which this spirit has been put in practice upon an extended scale, it succeeded. It will succeed with Christian nations, unless Christianity and civilisation render men more ungovernable and unprincipled than the untutored Indians with whom William Penn had to deal: these were completely won and subdued by this defensive and truly Christian armour; and, when its use shall be better understood, Christian nations will cease to learn war; and there will be "nothing to hurt or destroy."

Some, Sire, may cavil with my having, on the present occasion, appealed so confidently to pro-



phesy. It has, indeed, been too much the custom with several commentators, even with men of considerable eminence as writers and scholars, to identify the awful and wonderful events that have been passing in our own days, with some of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, which admit of a variety of interpretation. The prophecies to which I have appealed are of a very different description, and can hardly be misapplied or misunderstood. These prophecies place our holy religion in the most dignified and delightful point of view, as the path to universal peace and philanthropy. The Author of our divine religion is also by these prophecies placed in the most lovely and captivating light, as peculiarly entitled to our veneration, our gratitude, our obedience, and our love. This application of prophecy adds strength to the Christian evidences, and repels one of the most powerful arguments of sceptics against the religion of Christ.

I trust, Sire, that the state of *gross darkness*\*, which has for so many centuries been producing war and destruction, is fast passing away, and light approaching with a steady step ; and that, without improperly indulging the imagination, we may consider the present times as those described by the prophet as *neither day nor night*, previous to the *evening time* (of Christianity), when it shall be *light*†. We are accustomed to regard the times

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\* Isaiah lx. 2.

† Zachariah xiv. 6, 7.

in which we live with a partial and complacent eye; and, comparing them with those that are past, to exult in our superiority over our predecessors. We have, indeed, much cause for gratitude for many national blessings; but, as Christians, none for exultation, when we call to mind the torrents of human blood that have been shed in our own times, in direct opposition to the precepts of Jesus.

When Christians, Sire, shall subdue the anti-christian spirit of ambition, of resistance, and revenge,—or, in the words of St. James, those *lusts* from whence wars arise,—and, instead of emulating the heroes of antiquity, to which the present course of education propels them, they shall take Jesus Christ for their pattern:—when, like him, men shall think it more honourable to submit with patience to a blow, than to return it with interest:—when men shall prefer the approbation of God, to the admiration of their fellow-men; or, in a word, when they become Christians:—then “will they beat their swords into plough-shares;” and “nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war any more.” This, Sire, is the language of prophecy; and in the application of it, and of the precepts of Jesus, I trust that “*I have spoken forth the words of truth and soberness.*”

I think it incumbent upon me, Sire, before I conclude this letter, to assure Your Majesty that, in retiring from your Naval Service, I am solely actuated by those motives which I have set forth; and

that I have not been led to take this step by any men or body of men. To one friend only has my intention been known from the first ; and I have the happiness to know that this friend, (who will be a fellow-sufferer from the act,) most cordially approves what I have done. Nor, Sire, have I, till very near the time of sending these pages to the press, read any of the valuable publications of Peace Societies in this and other countries. The recent perusal of some of their works has afforded me the most heart-felt satisfaction, together with the pleasure of knowing that though these pages may excite feelings of pity and contempt in many, yet that they are in accordance with the opinions of numbers of pious Christians of distinguished rank and literary attainments in different parts of the world. Believing, Sire, that the publications of the Peace Societies have not only a tendency to annihilate war, but also to promote religion, and with it obedience to sovereigns, I sincerely wish they may be more extensively read than they have hitherto been.

May it, Sire, please the Supreme Disposer of events to grant that Your Majesty's reign may be prolonged, and that it may continue to be peaceable, prosperous, and happy ; and may it accord with the wisdom and benevolence of His divine government of the world, shortly to put an end to all war and bloodshed, and incline the hearts of men to deeds of mercy and philanthropy : and may



Your Majesty, and the highly-favoured nation you govern, he made the glorious instruments of spreading through the world pure and unadulterated Christianity, or that "*knowledge of the Lord*" which can alone produce and secure the peace and civilisation of the world.

Thus highly honoured, Britain may indulge in the hope that not only her existence as a nation, but also her tranquillity will endure ; and that she will not be consigned, by the great Ruler of the universe, to the lot uniformly recorded in history of other great and warlike nations, who, having been raised by the sword, have also perished by the sword.

Though, Sire, I have, for the reasons I have stated, withdrawn myself from Your Majesty's Naval Service, it will ever be my most earnest wish, as it will also be my constant endeavour, as a Christian, and as a subject, to approve myself, with unfeigned deference and respect,

Sire,

Your Majesty's most faithful,

Most dutiful, and devoted Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

Sutton, near Thirsk,

14th Jan. 1825.

# OBSERVATIONS

ON

## THE CAUSES, THE EVILS,

AND

## THE UNLAWFULNESS OF WAR;

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

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SECOND EDITION.

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“As contrary as cruelty is to mercy, tyranny to charity, so is war and bloodshed to the meekness and gentleness of the Christian religion.”

JEREMY TAYLOR.

### LETTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

“I labour for peace.”—PSALM CXX. 6.

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MY DEAR SIR,

THAT my conduct in withdrawing myself from the public service of my country, and the letter which I deemed it my duty, on that occasion, to address to my Sovereign, should bring upon me the censure even of pious, good, and liberal men, like yourself, is what I was led to expect. War has, during so many ages, been “the chief study and amusement of kings,” the principal occupation of nations, and an established branch of education, that any interference with it was likely to rouse, not

only the attention, but the indignation of many. The war system, indeed, has so long existed, and is so blended in, and connected with, all our institutions, civil and religious, that any attack upon it is likely to be considered by some, not only as an attack upon these institutions, but upon Christianity itself. I trust, my dear sir, I feel as deep an interest as yourself in every thing which concerns the honour of our holy religion; and it will be my endeavour, in these letters, to maintain this honour, by showing that Christianity gives no sanction to the sanguinary system of war;—that “*no two things can be more different than the heroic and Christian character\**,”—that, “*as contrary as cruelty is to mercy, tyranny to charity, so is war and bloodshed to the meekness and gentleness of the Christian religion†.*”

A desire of brevity induced me, in my letter to my Sovereign, to suppress much important matter relating to the unlawfulness of war, which I now mean to produce. If that and the following letters shall awaken attention to a subject, on which mankind have not bestowed that consideration to which it is, from its importance, entitled, my expectations will be fully realized.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your permission to answer your truly friendly letter through the medium of the press. This convinces me that truth is *your* object, as well as mine; and it affords me an opportunity of not only replying to your particular objections, but also of noticing the general ones of

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\* Paley's Evidences of Christianity. † Jer. Taylor.



Porteus, Paley, and others who have written on the subject. In this way I hope to render my apology for withdrawing myself from my profession, more complete than I have yet done; a duty which I owe to myself, and the noble cause in which I am engaged; I call it noble, because "*I labour for peace.*"

The question whether Christians are permitted, by their religion, without inquiry, to slaughter each other, on the beat of the drum, the sound of the trumpet, or on particular words of command being given, or by virtue of certain written documents, is assuredly one of the very highest importance to the political, as well as the spiritual interests of mankind. If it can be made to appear that there is only a bare possibility that national disputes may be settled without an appeal to the sword, humanity, as well as duty, demands that the attempt should be made. Your arguments neither show that it is impossible to prevent war, nor that Christians can engage in it, without forfeiting their allegiance to God and to Christ. If, on such a subject, doubts exist, we ought to decide on that side which best accords with the benignant principles of the Gospel; for that Gospel, like its divine promulgator, is "the way, the truth, and the life." Had I, however, entertained the least doubt concerning the unlawfulness of war, or of the possibility of its extinction, I should not have taken the decisive step I have done. The fullest conviction that I was advocating the cause of truth, enabled me to meet with calmness and equanimity, the pity and scorn

to which it was likely to expose me. The same conviction also emboldens me to address you with a degree of ease and confidence I should not otherwise feel, in writing on a subject involving the interests of civilized society.

In reply to your remark concerning the multitude of *reformers* of the present day, I beg to ask you in the words, or nearly in the words, of a learned and good man, delivered upon a very solemn and important occasion, and which must be fresh in your memory.

“When is a day ever likely to arise in the world more auspicious for this great labour of Christian love, than that which now shines upon our hopes? When shall men dare to act upon the rules of Gospel morality, if they neglect a period like the present, when, void of alarm from our neighbours, every thing is delightfully tranquil among ourselves? Have we the maxims of perfect mercy and justice constantly upon our lips, and are we never to give them the opportunity of trial? Shall we acknowledge the commands of Heaven as binding on our public not less than on our private actions, and shall we refuse to practise collectively what we individually profess? Are we still to navigate by the narrow coastings of human policy, and never to sail by the polar star of the Gospel? In pursuing the law of God into its practical application among men, what means this everlasting fear of consequences? What is it, indeed, but to betray want of faith as well as of obedience? What is it but to doubt his protecting Providence; and while we look up and trust the Ruler with his skies, dispute or deny to him the government of his earth\*.”

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\* See a Sermon preached at the Assizes at York, March 20, 1825, by the Rev. James Tate, M. A.—Mr. Tate's remarks are applied to a different subject, namely, Catholic emancipation.

If, however, I am to be classed with the reformers of the present day, my situation, you must acknowledge, is a singular, if not a mortifying one. The Tories, I am sure, will not own me. The Whigs, though advocates for peace, have no objection to the loaves and fishes arising from war, and will have no fellowship with a man who will not fight. The Radicals, for the same reasons, will probably laugh me to scorn. As to the great and the learned, whether among the laity or clergy, should these letters ever be perused by them, I can have little hopes of their making any serious impression; for they militate against their prejudices, their interests, and their pride,—obstacles almost as difficult as to remove mountains.

Though the small number of Christians who think as I do on the subject of war has of late years increased, and I trust is daily increasing; yet the only persons, as a body of men, from whom I can hope for cordial cooperation, are the members of the Peace Societies, now established in various parts of the world, whom you denominate *Utopian reformers*. Believing that our Lord and his apostles were reformers of this description; indeed, that they formed the first PEACE SOCIETY that ever was established on earth, I feel honoured by being enrolled in this Utopian band; and though I come into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, I hope I shall not be altogether an unprofitable servant.

One great end of Christ's being sent into the world, appears to have been, to establish the reign



of universal peace and righteousness ; “ not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” The noble work which our Lord began, it is the duty of all Christians, as his servants, but more especially of Christian ministers, as his ambassadors, to labour to accomplish. “ Forgetting those things which are behind,” the past ages of gross darkness, they are to “ reach forth to those things which are before,” the establishment of the reign of Christ. Considering you and all Christian ministers as husbandmen in the vineyard of peace, I cannot offer you a more benevolent or apostolic wish, than that the Lord of the vineyard may enable you “ to render him the fruits.” If, my dear sir, we ask what fruits of “ peace on earth” have the ministers of either the Greek, the Roman, or the Protestant churches to show to their Lord at his coming ? the answer is, NONE ! and that in all these churches, men called Christians have every where been slaughtering each other with a barbarity not exceeded by Mohammedans or Pagans ; and the ministers of Christ, instead of deprecating war, have not only offered up prayers for the destruction of their brethren, but on the altars of the Prince of Peace have, following the practice of Pagan Rome, hallowed the banners of war. Christians, instead of ceasing to learn war, with a refinement, exceeding that of Pagans, erect colleges to instruct youth in the art and science of human destruction upon mathematical and scientific principles ; and *Christian* parents, at least many of them, instead of imbuing the minds of their chil-

dren with pacific principles, are anxious to place them in those seminaries, as the high road to wealth and honour ; they appear to forget that a reward of a more exalted nature is reserved for those who "*labour for peace.*" If we may judge of the importance of Christian duties by the rewards attached to them, the promotion of peace is one of the very first duties of a Christian ; for to it is allotted by our Saviour the highest honour to which a human being can aspire ;—"Blessed," says our Lord, "are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Notwithstanding scenes of bloodshed and devastation have passed in the present century, which can hardly be paralleled in the history of the world ; and notwithstanding the rewards promised by the Saviour of mankind to peace-makers, the ministers of Christ, with few exceptions, have remained as silent and inert in all parts of Europe, as if the establishment of "peace on earth" formed no part of their duty. If they continue thus silent, may they not expect "the stones to cry out?" Figuratively, this may be said to be already the case ; for at this very time, God seems to be raising up from among the laity, *men of peace*, in various nations, who, in a way that tends to establish, on the firmest basis, the authority of legitimate government, in connection with the best interests of Christianity, are labouring to inculcate upon mankind the pacific precepts and principles that pervade every page of the New Testament. A union of the clergy of the Established Churches with these *men of peace*, would greatly

facilitate the establishment of universal peace, on the solid basis of Christian morality\*.

You will, perhaps, tell me that, by the XXXVIIth Article, the ministers of the Church of England are precluded from such a union. It is greatly to be

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\* The author having been blamed by some of his clerical friends, for being too severe upon the clergy in the foregoing remarks, begs to submit to them the following extract from *Erasmus's Complaint of Peace*.

"While the king does his duty as the guardian and preserver, instead of the destroyer, of the people committed to his charge, let the right reverend the bishops do their duty likewise. Let the priests be priests indeed; preachers of peace and good-will;"

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"let the whole body of the clergy remember the truly evangelical duties of their profession; and let the grave professors of theology in our universities, or wherever else they teach divinity, remember to teach nothing as men-pleasers unworthy of Christ. Let all the clergy, however they may differ in rank, order, sect, or persuasion, unite to cry down war, and discountenance it through the nation, by zealously and faithfully arraigning it from the pulpit: in the public functions of their several churches, in their private conversation and intercourse with the laity, let them be constantly employed in the Christian, benevolent, humane work of preaching, recommending, and inculcating peace. If, after all their efforts, the clergy cannot prevent the breaking out of war, let them never give it the slightest approbation, directly or indirectly; let them never give countenance to it by their presence at its silly parade or bloody proceedings; let them never pay the smallest respect to any great patron, or prime minister, or courtier, who is the author or adviser of a state of affairs so contrary to their holy profession, and to every duty and principle of the Christian religion as in a state of war." *Complaint of Peace, by Erasmus*, page 55. See a translation reprinted in London in 1802, by T. Gillet, *Salisbury Square*. The original work was dedicated to Philip of Burgundy, Bishop of Utrecht, who, in a letter addressed to the author, says, "Your Complaint of Peace delights not only myself, to whom it is expressly dedicated, but all sincere professors of Christianity." See Preface to the *Complaint of Peace*, page v.

How few *protestant* bishops of the present day would patronize, or even tolerate an Erasmus!



regretted that the ministers of Christ, or others, of any national church, should have burthens laid upon them by human authority, that may, in anywise, interfere with their duty to God. It is for you and them to consider, whether, like the Pharisees of old, you do not "make the commandments of God of none effect, by your *ordinances*." It is for you, conscientiously to consider whether these ordinances speak the words of "truth and soberness," or whether they are "hay and stubble." It is for you to consider, whether you do not libel the Bible, and tell the Almighty that his Book is incomplete without your emendations—that your wisdom is superior to his. Especially it is for you to consider, whether those who impose, and also those who receive these ordinances, do not add to the things contained in that sacred volume; and whether they do not injure the Gospel of peace, and, by making it less pacific, render it less *credible* than it would otherwise be. Dr. Paley, in the dedication to Bishop Law of his Moral and Political Philosophy, observes, that "whatever renders religion more rational, renders it more credible; that he who by a diligent and faithful examination of the original records, dismisses from the system one article which contradicts the apprehension, the experience, or the reasoning of mankind, does more towards recommending the belief, and with the belief the influence of Christianity, to the understandings and consciences of serious inquirers, and through them to universal reception and authority, than can be effected by a thousand contenders for creeds and ordinances of

human establishment." Intending, in future letters, not only to point out the causes of war, but to show that war, in every shape, is altogether inaccordant with the spirit of Christianity, and consequently unlawful, I shall, for the present, dismiss the subject; only observing that, at this very time, the evils attending superstition, creeds, and ordinances of human establishment, are lamentably exemplified in the South of Europe.

The great warfare in which Christians are not only permitted, but in which it is their duty to engage, is the subjugation of those lusts from whence wars arise. This Christian warfare, which will ultimately benefit the whole world, and cannot injure either nations or individuals, ought to alarm no good men, for it is to be prosecuted by weapons that "are not carnal." They are, however, equal to the glorious effect they are destined to produce, "the bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ\*." But as Christians in the early ages degenerated by slow degrees, so we may expect that they will hereafter be regenerated in the same progressive manner. The learned writer I have already quoted, (Paley,) observes, that Christianity "can only operate as an alterative. By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are insensibly prepared to perceive and correct the enormities which folly, or wickedness, or accident, have introduced into public establishments." This slow, but sure progress of Christia-

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\* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

nity, is more forcibly described by our Saviour, when he says that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." During the first two centuries, this leaven produced a race of men, whom no earthly consideration could induce to shed human blood in war\*: that its operation will again become thus powerful, nay, that it will be extended to the whole world, every believer in the plain literal prophecies of the Old Testament must consider as certain; and on these prophecies are founded some of the surest evidences of the Christian revelation. But in our own country, with the exception of one sect, and that sect inconsiderable in point of numbers, Christians appear to "care for none of these things."

Rather than engage in war, as I shall hereafter have occasion to show, the early Christians, at the expense of their fortunes, their liberty, and their lives, bore a noble testimony to its unlawfulness under the Christian dispensation. Shall Christians, then, of the present day, who are exempt from such severe trials; who, at the most, have little to encounter beyond the coldness of old friends, or the sarcasms of injudicious or unfeeling opponents; shall men, bearing the Christian name, from the mere dread of shame, or the apprehension of being thought singular, desist from "professing a good profession before many witnesses;" and forfeit the glorious privilege of being called "the children of

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\* See Letters ix. and x.



God?" Or, shall men, from the slavish fear of embracing a very unpopular doctrine, incur the risk of being disowned by Christ before God?

One of the greatest obstacles to the establishment of universal peace, appears to be the erroneous opinions entertained concerning war. A large portion of mankind, and you appear to be of the number, think wars are almost as unavoidable as storms and earthquakes; that nothing less than the special interposition of God can put a stop to them; and that it is the duty of individuals, instead of labouring for peace, patiently to await his time. This seems to be neither more nor less than saying, that we must patiently await God's time, without any effort of our own, to free us from covetousness, ambition, jealousy, and revenge, or those *lusts* from whence wars arise. I believe, as firmly as yourself, that wars cannot be prevented, or these lusts eradicated, but by divine interposition: but let me ask, Has not God already specially and miraculously interposed through the *Gospel of peace*? Is not this Gospel sufficient to establish "peace and righteousness on earth?" And have we any reason to suppose that God has given us an imperfect revelation of his will; and that he will further interpose, except in the usual course of his providence, or by human agency? By this agency, or by the exertions of wise and good men, the feudal system, the inquisition, the slave-trade, and many other evils, have been very considerably diminished. By the same means, we may confidently anticipate, God will put an end to war, a much greater evil than all those

evils combined. But to expect that wars will cease without our endeavours, is as futile as to expect to become wise and virtuous, without using the necessary means to attain wisdom and virtue. Had the early Christians satisfied themselves with merely wishing or praying for the coming of the kingdom of God, like a large portion of the Christians of the present day, the light of Christianity, it is probable, would long ago have been extinguished.

You remark that the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, the Bible Society, and various other Societies, sedulously inculcate those Gospel precepts, which, under the blessing of God, will, in his appointed time, prevail over the war system; and you add, that "many of the clergy of the Established Church are already diligently employed in preaching the very precepts which I hold out as the sure road to establish permanent peace; and, therefore, that what I have done was uncalled-for, and the establishment of Peace Societies altogether unnecessary."

In reply to these remarks, I can assure you, that I contemplate the establishment of the former Societies with pleasure, and I believe that we are greatly indebted to their operations, for counteracting the evil effects of war. The number of the clergy, however, who preach these doctrines, is, I fear, very small. By a large portion of the most popular preachers of the present day, they are regarded as little better than *cold heathen morality*. Allowing, however, that our Lord's sermon on the mount were more generally enforced in the religious tracts distributed, and also from the pulpit, it seems neces-

sary, in order to its eradicating war, that its artillery (if I may be allowed the expression) should be brought to bear directly on that subject. You, as a member of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, maintain that the Liturgy, along with the Scriptures, is necessary to guide men to embrace the doctrines of the Established Church\*. Upon the same principle I contend, that the tracts of the Peace Societies are necessary to guide men to embrace the paths of peace; and I deem it my duty to contend for this the more earnestly, as some of the clergy have endeavoured to prove from Scripture, that war is lawful; a position which the tracts of the Peace Societies demonstrate, as far as the subject is capable of demonstration, to be erroneous.

I beg leave here to premise, that the following letters are written under the conviction, that the divine precepts of the Gospel are of universal application. That the moral duties clearly prescribed there to individuals are equally binding on nations and their rulers: for it necessarily follows, that if they are binding on individuals, they must be so on nations, which are composed of individuals. And it is cheering to the friend of peace to find, that sovereigns united in holy alliance consider these precepts as *the only means of consolidating human institutions, and remedying their imperfections.*

Believing that neither those who govern, nor those who are governed, can be absolved from their obedience to the precepts of the Gospel, and that at the great day of final retribution, whether prince or

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\* See a Sermon preached by Dr. Herbert Marsh before the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, June 13th, 1811.



subject, "the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him; and that none of them (*emperor, pope, or priest,*) can, by any means, redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him\*,"—convinced of these important truths, I have deemed it my duty to follow the dictates of conscience; and to those who make the Christian precepts applicable only to individuals, in their *private* capacities, I fearlessly say what our Saviour said to the Pharisees, "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

Before I conclude this my introductory letter, permit me to transcribe, if not for your use, for the use of general readers, the solemn appeal of the pious and learned author (Erasmus), whom I have already quoted, and to whose writings I shall probably again refer.

"Kings! to you I make my first appeal. On your nod, such is the constitution of human affairs, the happiness of mortals is made to depend. You assume to be the images and representatives of Christ your sovereign. Then, as you wish men to hear your voice, show the example of obedience, and hear the voice of your Sovereign Lord, commanding you upon your duty, to seek peace and abolish war. Be persuaded that the world, wearied with its long-continued calamities, demands this of you, and has a right to insist on your immediate compliance.

"Priests! to you I appeal as consecrated to the God of Love and Mercy. On your consciences I require you to promote, with all the zeal of your hearts and abilities of your

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\* Ezek. xviii. 20.

minds, that which you know is most agreeable to God ; and to explode, discountenance, and repel, with equal ardour and activity, what you know in your hearts he abhors.

“Preachers of all denominations! to you I appeal. Preach the Gospel of peace. Let the doctrines of peace and goodwill for ever resound in the ears of the people.

“Bishops, and all who are pre-eminent in ecclesiastical dignity! I call upon you, that the high authority and influence which you possess over the minds of both kings and people, may be exerted to bind upon their hearts, with bonds indissoluble, the sacred obligations to peace.

“Dukes, lords, grantees, placemen, and magistrates of every description! I appeal to you, that your hearty goodwill may co-operate in the work of peace, with the wisdom of kings, and the piety of priests.

“I appeal to all who call themselves Christians! I urge them, as they would manifest their sincerity, and preserve their consistency, to unite with one heart and one soul, in the abolition of war, and the establishment of perpetual and universal peace.” *Translation of Complaint of Peace*, page 74, 75.

May all Christians henceforth renounce the dangerous errors and illusions under which they so long have laboured concerning war.—May they, when they say “Thy kingdom come,” resolve to promote the cause of “peace on earth, and goodwill towards men.” And when they say “Thy will be done,” may they determine, as far as in them lies, to do it.—In these two short sentences we have not only a prayer for universal peace, but a certain way pointed out to obtain it. When men shall pursue this way, *the sword will cease to devour.*

I remain, &c. &c.

## LETTER II.

### ON THE ALLEGED CAUSES OF WAR.

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"One speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth wait for him."—*Jer.* ix. 8.

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MY DEAR SIR,

THE first step towards the cure of any evil, moral or political, mental or corporeal, is generally allowed to be a discovery of its causes. By the removal of these, an effectual and lasting cure may reasonably be anticipated. Any other mode of proceeding can be considered only as mere empiricism, and more likely, in the long run, to aggravate, than to remove the evil. An inquiry, therefore, into the causes of war, seems an indispensable preliminary.

The causes of war may be divided into two classes:—the alleged, or those held out by rulers and their ministers; and the latent, or real causes. The former, which may be denominated "reasons of state," will form the subject of my present letter.

Among the reasons of state, or the means whereby men have been cheated into war, the BALANCE of POWER has long held a pre-eminent station, and has involved the nations of Europe in a series of wars and calamities. If we peruse the history of



our own country, as connected with the continental powers, during the two last centuries, and consider the treasure that has been expended, and the number of lives that have been sacrificed to maintain it, we must come to the conclusion, that among European or Christian nations, peace and happiness depend entirely upon this balance ; that these nations have no religion, no moral law for their guidance ; and that if one nation, from its industry or any other cause, becomes more powerful than the rest, it must, by the sword, be reduced to its proper level. The great states of Europe have generally been divided into factions, for they deserve no other name ; and the lesser states have been considered as their property, and transferred from one faction to another, as make-weights at the end of a war, so as to preserve this fancied equilibrium. This, my dear sir, places rational beings, or perhaps, I ought rather so say, human beings, on the footing of the beasts of the field, that nothing but physical force can keep in order.

That the wickedness or violence of mankind, even since what is called the Reformation, should have been so overwhelming, that nothing has been thought likely to prevent men from destroying each other, but the superiority or equality of the means of destruction, is truly humiliating. Could any means be devised to prevent the effusion of human blood, it would be wise and humane to employ them. But as to the balance of power, it is subject to continual change and vibration. The marriage or death of a prince or princess may destroy the

fancied equilibrium, and involve many nations in war and misery in order to restore it.

Nothing but universal poverty seems likely to maintain this balance, and, on this principle, to secure to the world the blessings of peace. The prosperous state, therefore, of our commerce, our manufactures, and our revenues, instead of a blessing, may become a curse to us. It may, in a few years, should peace continue, render us so formidable in the eyes of the continental powers, that, in order to preserve this balance of power, they may think it necessary to confederate against us. To prevent this, if we are to follow the practice of our forefathers, it may be expedient to administer some salutary checks to our industry, and by increasing our public expenses, keep our national wealth and resources within due limits; for at present by growing rich faster than our neighbours, we are destroying the *balance of power*, and running headlong into another war;—to this, however, our national debt opposes a happy and salutary check.

The conduct of nations, in general, has been little calculated to insure peace; and rulers, so far from teaching their subjects to love their enemies, use every art to promote hatred and discord in the world. Not only are manifestoes published to excite and keep alive a malevolent spirit, but the press, in various ways sounds the trumpet of war; and even the pulpit is employed to instigate men to vengeance and slaughter, rather than to forgiveness and peace. In this way, men, made in the image of God,—men endowed with reason, and pro-

fessing themselves the subjects of the Prince of Peace,—are led to slaughter each other, not merely without reluctance, but with a full persuasion that they are acting as the disciples of Jesus, and serving a God of mercy. All this time the real cause is perhaps only known to a few, and may not unfrequently be discovered in the following lines of our sagacious bard :

“ . . . . I well might lodge a fear  
To be again displaced ; which to avoid,  
I cut them off, and had a purpose now  
To lead out many to the Holy Land,  
Lest rest and lying still might make them look  
Too near into my state. Therefore, my Harry,  
Be it thy course to busy giddy minds  
With foreign quarrels.”

To a humane mind it would seem scarcely within the bounds of possibility, that, among those who have ever read the precepts of Jesus, there can be found any who are so entirely depraved or infatuated, as deliberately, in their closets, to fabricate pretences for instigating their brethren of different nations, to slaughter each other. I fear, my dear sir, that there is hardly one Christian nation that can plead *Not guilty* to this most severe charge.

Every man professing himself a follower of Jesus, ought, before he lifts his hand to slay his brother, to ask himself if the religion of his Lord permits him to do so. The followers of Mohammed are justified by their religion in *taking the sword* ; but not so the disciples of Jesus : and it is for the Christian warrior to consider, whether at the great day of



account, he will not be placed in a worse situation than the Mohammedan. It may be an excuse to the latter to say that he is a soldier, and that it is his duty, as a good Mussulman, to fight. This plea cannot avail the Christian: it is his duty, like the Bereans, to search the Scriptures; and, if he finds that they permit not war, he must, at his peril, refrain from it. When men in earnest take the Scriptures for their rule of life, wars must cease—nay, setting aside Scripture, if they only take reason or common sense for their guide, this must be the case; for nothing can be more certain than that

“ . . . War’s a game, which, were their subjects wise,  
Kings would not play at.”

Permit me, my dear sir, to give you a summary of those reasons which plunge nations into war.—According to Dean Swift, they are :

“ Sometimes the ambition of princes, who never think they have land enough to govern. Sometimes the corruption of ministers, who engage their master in war, in order to stifle or divert the clamour of their subjects against their evil administration. Difference of opinion has cost many millions of lives.”——“ Sometimes the quarrel between two princes is to decide which of them should dispossess a third of his dominions, where neither of them pretends to any right. Sometimes one prince quarrels with another, for fear another should quarrel with him. Sometimes a war is entered into, because the enemy is too strong, and sometimes because he is too weak. Sometimes our neighbours want the things we have, or have the things which we want: and so both fight till they take ours, or we theirs.”

“ It is a very justifiable cause of war, to invade a country after the people have been wasted by famine, destroyed by

pestilence, or embroiled by factions among themselves. It is justifiable to enter into war against our nearest ally, when one of his towns lies convenient for us, or a territory of land that would render our dominion round and compact.

“If a prince sends forces into a nation where the people are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put half of them to death, and make slaves of the rest, in order to civilize them, and reduce them from their barbarous way of living. It is a very kingly, honourable, and frequent practice, when one prince desires the assistance of another to secure him against invasion, that the assistant, when he has driven out the invader, should seize on the dominions himself, and kill, imprison, or banish the prince he came to relieve.”

These are not merely the sentiments of a witty or satirical writer; the virtuous and learned Erasmus expresses the same sentiments, in more sober language. After speaking of the blessings of peace, and the dispositions which men ought to cherish in order to preserve it, he says :

“On the contrary, men, in our times, go out of their way to seek occasions of war; and whatever makes for peace, they run down in their sophistical speeches, or even basely conceal from the public; but whatever tends to promote their favourite war system, they industriously exaggerate and inflame, not scrupling to propagate lies of the most mischievous kind, false or garbled intelligence, and the grossest misrepresentation of the enemy. I am ashamed to relate what real and dreadful tragedies of real life they found on these vile and despicable trifles;—from how small an ember they blow up a flame, and set the world on fire. Then they summon before them the whole catalogue of supposed injuries received; and each party views its own grievance with a glass that magnifies beyond all bounds: but as for benefits received, they all fall into the profoundest oblivion as soon

as received; so that upon the whole, an impartial observer would swear that great men love war for its own sake, with all their hearts and souls, provided their own persons are safe.

“After all the pretences thrown out, and the artifices used, to irritate the vulgar, there often lurks, (as the true cause of wars) in the bosoms of kings, some private, mean, and selfish motive, which is to force their subjects to take up weapons to kill one another, at the word of command, and as they wish to evince their loyalty. But, instead of a private and selfish object, in which not only the public, that is, not only one single community, but in which man, human nature, is deeply interested to justify the voluntary commencement of a war.

“But when kings find no cause of this kind, (as indeed they seldom can,) then they set their wits to work to invent some fictitious but plausible occasion for a rupture. They will make use of the names of foreign countries, artfully rendered odious to the people, in order to feed the popular odium, till it becomes ripe for war, and thirsts for the blood of the outlandish nation, whose very name is rendered a cause of hostility. This weakness and folly of the very lowest classes of the people, the grandees increase by artful insinuations, watch-words, and nicknames, cunningly thrown out in debates, pamphlets, and journals. Certain of the clergy, whose interest it is to cooperate with the grandees in any unchristian work, join, with great effect, aided by religion, in a pious imposition on the poor. Thus, for instance, an Englishman, say they, is the natural enemy of a Frenchman, because he is a Frenchman.”—*Complaint of Peace*, page 58, 59.

There are, perhaps, few wars that may not be attributed to some of the causes here set forth: and the sentiments here expressed have the sanction of royal authority. Frederic the Second, (or the



Great,) king of Prussia, in a history of his own times, and of the wars in which he was personally concerned, has made the following remarks, among many others of a similar import.

Speaking of the conduct of statesmen in transactions connected with war, he says :

“Whoever has a heart capable of compassion, when he coolly examines such objects, must be agitated at the remembrance of evils which statesmen, either from want of wisdom, or hurried on by their passions, have brought upon nations.”

The same monarch, speaking of the ease with which rulers form manifestoes, says :

“When sovereigns are determined to come to a rupture, they will not hesitate concerning the materials for a manifesto: they decide, make war, and leave the care of their justification to some laborious civilian.”

On the principle of making war, Frederic says :

“Reason prescribes a rule on this subject, from which it appears to me, no statesman ought to depart; which is, to seize occasion, and when that is favourable, to be enterprising; but neither force occasion, nor leave any thing to chance.”

In other words; like the tiger, never spring upon the prey till it is within your reach, and then *reason prescribes* that you are to *seize the occasion* and devour your prey. For such a man to talk of compassion, is like a highwayman or pickpocket talking of honesty.

Knox, in his *Essays*, how justly I leave you to decide, says :

“If the king of Prussia were not at the head of some of

the best troops in the universe, he would be judged more worthy of being tried, cast, and condemned at the Old Bailey, than any shedder of blood who ever died by a halter. But he is a king; but he is a hero:—those names fascinate us, and we enrol the butcher of mankind among their benefactors.”

By eulogizing military heroes, modern writers, as well as ancient ones, have done much to keep alive a martial spirit. But can we regard men, even of the highest military rank, serving under characters such as Frederic and Napoleon, in any other light than as the servile and degraded tools of unprincipled, ambitious, and cruel men; the enemies of humanity, and the scourges of mankind? You consider as harsh, the expression I have elsewhere used\*, namely, that “The moment a man sells himself to his sovereign, or his country, for the purpose of human destruction, he loses *caste* as a Christian.” I can assure you that I did not use this expression to condemn others, but to justify myself for quitting the naval profession. Dr. Paley appears to me to express the same sentiment, and even more forcibly, when he says, “that no two things can be more contrary than the heroic and Christian character.” Every man, entering as an officer into the navy or army, if he does not aim at the heroic character, is unfit for either of these services; and, if he succeeds in his object, he obtains the very reverse of “the Christian character.”—As a Christian, “he *loses caste*.”

This truth, my dear sir, ought to be solemnly im-

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\* Letter to the King, &c. page 7:

pressed upon the minds of young men who aspire to military fame, when they enter the profession, by their parents, their tutors, and their spiritual guides. I fear that all these are often little better than blind leaders of the blind; and that they too frequently cause young men to entertain views concerning the glory of the military profession altogether erroneous, and, in many respects, subversive of the first principles of Christianity,—the only solid foundation for the safety of nations, and for the honour, and real respectability, of individuals. “If,” said the Almighty to the Jews, “ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;” . . . . . “ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land in safety. And I will give peace in the land; and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid\*.” Let Christians keep the statutes given them by their great Lawgiver, and they may cherish a well-grounded hope, that, in addition to these temporal blessings, they will secure to themselves an eternity of happiness and peace.

I remain, &c. &c.

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\* Lev. xxvi. 3—6,



### LETTER III.

#### ON THE REAL CAUSES OF WAR.

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“ From whence come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members ? ”

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MY DEAR SIR,

THE legitimate and practical inference from my last letter is, that nations have been drawn into the greater part of the wars in which they have been engaged, not only without solid and justifiable reasons, but very frequently merely to gratify the wishes or resentments of ambitious, weak, or worthless men. Covetousness, jealousy, a desire to govern, and a thirst for military fame, acting upon minds unoccupied by correct religious or moral principles, have blinded the understandings of both princes and subjects, and rendered them not only ready and willing to shed the blood of others, but they seem to consider this as the most honourable of all employments ; and are as desirous to excel in it, as if the honour of God, their duty to him, and their own salvation, depended upon their military prowess.

With minds inflamed and irritated by artful manifestoes, and by the specious harangues of statesmen and orators, Christians, instead of being ready

to pardon and forgive injuries, and thus obtain the friendly offices of other nations, agreeably to the dictates of prudence and duty, very frequently, for a trifling offence, demand satisfaction, with probably a threat that, if not conceded, it will be enforced. What is called national honour, is on no account to be sacrificed; and the risk of ruin is to be hazarded, rather than an insult forgiven. Thus nations are deluded into war; and war, when once begun, is generally continued, till the want of men or money compels one or both of the parties to give up the sanguinary contest, and generally, without either party obtaining satisfaction.

That wars have been, in many instances, entered into, on the most trifling occasions, and merely to gratify the malevolent passions of bad men, we have ample proofs from history; and the question of peace or war, in arbitrary governments, has sometimes hinged on very trifling or insignificant causes. A satirical expression of Frederic II. against three powerful women, as Monsieur Thiebault informs us, occasioned a long war: and a peace was produced by a mere billet from the same monarch to Maria Theresa\*.

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\* The following story is extracted from the *Herald of Peace*, vol. i. N. S. p. 108.

“In the year 1805, some soldier of the commonwealth of Modena ran away with a BUCKET from a public well belonging to the State of Bologna. This implement might be worth a shilling; but it produced a quarrel, which was worked up into a long and bloody war. Henry, the king of Sardinia, for the emperor Henry the Second, assisted the Modenese to keep possession of the bucket, and in one of

Standing armies, by causing jealousy and rivalry between nations, have a greater tendency to promote war, than to maintain peace, and may be considered as one of the most powerful and operative causes of war ; and wars must be frequent, so long

the battles he was made prisoner. His father, the emperor, offered a chain of gold that would encircle Bologna, which is seven miles in compass, for his son's ransom,—but in vain. After twenty-two years, imprisonment, he pined away. His monument is now extant in the church of the Dominicans. This fatal bucket is still exhibited in the Tower of the Cathedral at Modena, inclosed in an iron cage."

The following extract from the *Courier*, of Dec. 12th, 1827, shows that nations have not profited by experience.—Speaking of the late war between the Russians and Persians, it says :

"The original point in dispute between the prince Abbas Mirza and the late governor general Yermoloff, related to a *small piece of pasture-ground* near the lake of Gokcha,—of little value to either State ; but as the probability of a war enabled the prince to obtain pecuniary supplies from the king, the dispute was purposely kept unsettled, while the patience of Yermoloff was exhausted, and possession was taken of the disputed lands. The king of Persia, urged by his favourite minister Alleyer Khan (who, on the capture of Tebriz, fell into the hands of the Russians), and excited by the fanatical exhortation of a priest from the holy palace, Kerbela, refused to wait the result of the reference, proposed by the Russian ambassador at his court, to St. Petersburg, and declared war. His Persian Majesty, by his precipitation, deprived himself of the right either to the assistance, or mediation, of Great Britain, and is now at the mercy of a powerful enemy thus wantonly provoked."

In an order of the day addressed, by the Russian General Paskewitsch, to the army of the Caucasus, dated Oct. 13th, 1827, he says :

"There is nothing in the vast dominion of Persia which can oppose their progress. Two provinces, eighteen standards, fifty pieces of cannon, two sardars, twenty khans, six thousand prisoners, twelve thousand persons removed who have thrown down their arms, with supplies of provisions and munitions of war, he enumerates, in conclusion, as the trophies of the campaign."



as these armies are kept up. Lord Burleigh (I think) observes, that soldiers in time of peace are as useless as chimneys in summer. How very differently, my dear sir, do statesmen think now. The evils of war will, probably, at no distant period, become so apparent and so great, as materially to prevent its recurrence. This is certain, on the sure word of prophecy,—that when Christianity arrives at maturity, men will cease to learn war.

A great moral evil, and no inconsiderable cause of war, arises from the profession of arms affording to parents of the middle and higher classes an inducement to wish for war, as it enables them to place their sons in situations, where they may attain honour and wealth, without the vulgarity of trade. Young men, despising mercantile employment, and naturally adopting the prejudices of their parents, are led to wish for war: and whenever a peace takes place, hundreds of these have (what they consider) their just hopes and expectations blasted; and lament that the war was not continued a few months, or a year or two longer, that they might have attained another step in their profession, although this step might have cost the lives of thousands of human beings, and millions of national treasure: but it is surely to be deeply lamented, that young men, professing the Christian religion, should be placed in situations, where their interest may tempt them to entertain wishes so directly contrary to the first principles of that religion. That army-agents, army-contractors, army-tailors, cannon-founders, gun-makers, cutlers, and various other

“*craftsmen*,” should incite men to war, may be accounted for on the very principle, that the silversmiths of Ephesus contended for the worship of the goddess Diana. War brings no small gain to the craftsmen I have enumerated ; for it is by war they “have their wealth.” This, my dear sir, seems not unnatural in men who might be said to be the followers of Plutus, rather than of Jesus Christ. But that the nobility of Europe, and particularly those of Britain, should, in a period distinguished for learning, science, and humanity, make the destruction of their fellow-creatures a trade to give bread to their younger sons, is wholly unaccountable on Christian principles. Nobles may perhaps excuse themselves on the ground that the ministers of religion set them the example; and it is a fact, that a large portion of the sons of the clergy are set apart to the profession of arms, and that not a few of them have thereby attained the highest rank, professional and civil. It seems difficult to account for this dereliction of duty on any other principle, than that, when men once depart from the plain precepts of natural and revealed religion, their hearts become insensibly “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

Granting that war arises from the causes I have stated, another inquiry, and that of great importance, presents itself;—From whence arise those lusts, or warlike propensities, which occasion war; and can these be subdued? My answer is, that, to a certain extent they arise from the errors of education, and that their influence may, at least, be greatly diminished. This must be the case, unless

our system of education is already perfect ; an opinion that few will be bold enough to maintain. You appear to think war irremediable ;—do you also think that covetousness, ambition, jealousy, and revenge are irremediable ; and that the virtues of benevolence and forgiveness of injuries are fictions and unattainable by us ? If you thus think, a state of peace is, on your principles, unattainable : but, in arriving at this conclusion, you virtually admit that Christianity prohibits vices which we cannot resist, and imposes virtues which we have no power to practise. In other words, that it is only a fine-spun system of ethics, beautiful in theory, but incapable of being reduced to practice. Believing that Christianity is a practicable religion, and that the diminution of vice and the increase of virtue have been greatly retarded by errors in education, I will, with your permission, dedicate a few pages to this subject.

As a seaman, and with my slender pretensions to learning, it may appear presumptuous in me to hazard an opinion on such a subject ; but not much learning is required to convince the most careless observer, that the present systems of classical education have a direct tendency to produce a character the very reverse of “ meek, yielding, complying, forgiving ; not prompt to act, but willing to suffer ; silent and gentle under rudeness and insult ; suing for reconciliation, when others would demand satisfaction ; giving way to the pushes of impudence ; conceding and indulgent to the prejudices, the wrong-headedness, the intractability of those with



whom we have to deal.”—Education, as at present generally conducted, instead of forming the Christian character, here admirably described by Dr. Paley, is far more likely to form a character on a Roman or Grecian model, and to establish what most parents, blinded by classical prejudices, wish for; viz. the *heroic* character which “possesses vigour, firmness, resolution; is daring and active, quick in its sensibilities, jealous in its fame, eager in its attachments, inflexible in its purpose, violent in its resentment.” I would here ask you, my dear Sir, if you do not think it quite as possible by education, to establish one of these characters as the other? If the former “were universal, the case is clear: the world would be a society of friends. Whereas, if the other disposition were universal, it would produce a scene of universal contention. The world would not hold a generation of such men.” The present modes of education, experience shows, have a decided tendency to produce such men. In the nursery, the drum and the musket are admired playthings; and children, in their earliest years, acquire a love of military fame. What is still worse, they connect with this a contempt, or even hatred, for Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Papists; and are led to consider the killing of these, as not merely harmless, but as highly meritorious. Little pains are taken in after-education to correct such anti-christian impressions: on the contrary, they are permitted to grow with our growth, and too frequently to derive additional strength in the advanced stages of education. In the present rage for

classical and polite literature, the seeds of Christianity may very often be said to fall among thorns. As soon as a youth enters one of our classical, or *fighting*, schools, the small stock of Christian principles which he carries there is liable to be choked by classical weeds, and the Christian character to yield to the heroic.

In looking forward with the eye of faith to the glorious achievements which Christianity, on the sure evidence of literal prophecy, is destined to accomplish ; and in comparing this *prophetic* history with the blood-stained pages of the history of past and present ages,—we are unavoidably led to the conclusion, that there must have been something fundamentally wrong in the established systems of education in all nations. To this conclusion the remark of Solomon leads us: “Train up a child in the way he should go ; and, when he is old, he will not depart from it.” To the same conclusion the words of a greater than Solomon directly point; “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.”

As the paths of learning and science are becoming more accessible to all classes of society, and in all countries,—may the principles taught by the Prince of Peace be more extensively cultivated and cherished. And may the new seminaries erecting in this, and other countries, prove seminaries of peace and true religion, as well as of learning and science. By the fruits of the old establishments we may safely pronounce, that the tree (of *education*) has been evil ;—and that Christians in later days, like the Jews in former times, have “hewed to

themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water." That a better system of education may become universal,—“when the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever,”—is a wish to which every sincere and pious follower of Christ will most devoutly say, Amen !

When it is considered that most of the great statesmen of Europe, during many ages, have been brought up in classical and fighting seminaries, and that a similar education is indispensably necessary for a legislator, or even for a prince; and that many of these have finished their education in camps and fleets,—we need no longer wonder at the sanguinary and anti-christian criminal codes established in most nations; nor can we be surprised at our own heterogeneous code, which disqualifies those who slaughter animals, from sitting as jurors, while it permits those who slaughter men, to sit as legislators. When we further reflect, that a large portion of the bishops and superior clergy, have been educated in the same way, and taught from early youth to venerate the *lex talionis*, rather than the forgiving meekness of Jesus; we need not wonder that they have never advocated the unpopular and anti-classical doctrine of non-resistance, and patient endurance of evils, or that some of them have been the open and avowed advocates of war. We may rather be astonished that they have entertained any respect at all for the Christian code.

If we bring the matter home to our own country, and examine the orations that are held in the high-



est estimation, whether in the senate or at the bar, the standard of their excellence is their conformity to classical models. To be admired, an orator must speak and think classically ; and should any expression escape him, where Scriptural phrases or ideas are introduced, it is considered as an indelible mark of bad taste. I admit that we have many shining examples of individuals, uniting the meek and pacific spirit of Christianity with the highest classical attainments ; but may we not regard these as exceptions to a very general rule ? And can we suppose it probable, that where our ideas, and our modes of expressing them, are borrowed from Greece or Rome, our minds will not very generally correspond to these ideas ? Can we expect that our heads will be Roman, and our hearts Christian ? Can we expect that the professed admirers of the heroes of Homer, will be the sincere and humble followers of Jesus ? Then may we expect that young men educated in fighting and classical seminaries, will practise forgiveness of insults and injuries\*.

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\* In his Charge to the Grand Jury for Wiltshire, the Judge (alluding to a case where a knife had been used as an instrument of offence or defence) says : —“Gentlemen, The practice of boxing has often been a subject of discussion in this country ; I must say that it seems to me a practice that may very advantageously be encouraged to a limited extent. It is in some sort a law of peace, for it discourages the use of unfair means of attack ; it prevents malicious retaliation ; it only enables men to employ fairly advantages they may naturally possess, and in the use of which they are restrained by the point of honour ; and while it encourages a *proper English* spirit, it prevents courage from degenerating into brutality, and secures men from the treachery and malignity of those whom they have offended. Though, therefore, I view the prize ring as disgraceful, I cannot but hope to see the old

The early delusions and anti-christian principles imbibed in the nursery and at these public seminaries, so far from being corrected, or dispelled by reading or adult education, appear to be increased at every stage of knowledge. The historian, the poet, the dramatist, the novelist, as well as the public orator, the statesman, and even the grave divine, alike lead men away from the paths of peace. It is true they generally lament, and often with much eloquence, the dire calamities that war inflicts ; but they, for the most part, speak of the men through whose agency these evils are perpetrated, as heroes and patriots, nay, as patterns of Christian excellence.

It is, my dear sir, a very painful task to censure the particular actions of those whose general conduct we admire : but wrong actions or principles, in men otherwise estimable and good, are capable of producing evil, in a degree proportionate to the high characters these men maintain ; and therefore call the more urgently for animadversion.

practice of boxing revived among the people of this country ; as I consider that the practice introduces a law of honour among the combatants, which will effectually prevent those who observe it from resorting to instruments of this deadly description." See Atlas, vol. ii. pp. 484 and 582.

This learned *Lord Chief Justice* appears to set at naught the practices of civilized pagans as well as the precepts of Christ ; and to recommend those beings that are destined for immortality, to adopt the customs of "the beasts that perish," in settling their quarrels. He also seems to have lost sight of the precept of Solomon, "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Had not the author of the *Practical View* of Christianity, distinguished himself by an irreproachable life, and as the humane advocate of a persecuted set of human beings, his joining year after year in the votes for millions of treasure, for a purpose which necessarily exposed to destruction both the souls and bodies of thousands of his fellow-creatures; would have been of little moment. But the excellence of his moral character gives a sanction to war which Christianity withholds. Surely, my dear sir, no *Practical View* of the religion of Jesus, can lead us to the conclusion, that men slain in battle with their hands imbued in the blood of their brethren, and thirsting for vengeance, are in a state of grace, and proper objects for the approbation of that benignant Being who "has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." That these men will not be the objects of divine mercy, it is not our province to decide; we are commanded not to judge or condemn others, and we may rest satisfied that "the Judge of all the earth will do right."

It would seem difficult to reconcile the conduct of many friends to humanity with the principles of general philanthropy, or the love of our enemies; but some of the defenders of war appear to set common sense at defiance. In a late publication, a part of which is devoted to the subject of war, the author gravely recommends soldiers, whilst shooting or stabbing their enemies, to maintain towards them *a feeling of good-will*\*. With about equal

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\* Tracts and Essays, by the late W. Hey, esq. F.R.S.



humanity and consistency, Isaac Walton directs his pupil, whilst cruelly torturing a frog, *to handle him as if he loved him.*

A truly estimable man, and in his time a very popular preacher, did much to elevate the military character. Bishop Porteus in his Eighth Lecture, after detailing various arguments and examples deduced from Scripture, to show the lawfulness of war, says: "All which examples tend to confirm the observation already made, of the perfect consistency of a military and *every other mode of life*, with a firm belief in the doctrines, and a conscientious obedience to the precepts, of religion." I shall have occasion, in a subsequent letter, to refer to the writings of this prelate, and to this very lecture; but I give the above extract, in this place, merely to show the delusive views that good men may be brought to entertain concerning war; when they once allow themselves to deviate from the plain moral precepts of their great Teacher. I feel, however, that I ought not to censure with severity, the opinions of these virtuous men, as ten years ago, I read this same lecture with sentiments of approbation and satisfaction. I am free to confess to you, my dear sir, that since then, a thick veil or dark mist appears to be removed from my mental vision: if I may so express myself, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." If I am wrong, if I am deluded by fanaticism, I entreat you as a friend and a minister of the Gospel, to show me my error.

When we depart from the current opinions that

have been received as true for centuries past, we certainly ought to proceed with extreme caution. We ought to examine the foundation on which we build, whether it is a rock, or whether it is sand; whether we have reason and revelation on our side, or are led away by fancy or prejudice. In a situation of this kind, the rule of Mr. Locke seems peculiarly proper. In that part of his Essay concerning the human understanding, in which he treats of enthusiasm, and of persons being led to imagine that they are acting under the influences of the Holy Spirit, he says, in such cases,

“ We have reason and Scripture, unerring rules, to know whether it be from GOD or no. Where the truth embraced, is consonant to the revelation in the written word of GOD, or the action conformable to the dictates of right reason or Holy Writ, we may be assured that we run no risk in entertaining it as such : because though perhaps it be not an immediate revelation from GOD, extraordinarily operating on our minds, yet we are sure it is warranted by that revelation which he has given us of truth. But it is not the strength of our private persuasion within ourselves, that can warrant it to be a light or motion from Heaven ; nothing can do that, but the written word of God without us, or that standard of reason, which is common to us with all men. Where reason or Scripture is express for any opinion or action, we may receive it as of divine authority ; but it is not the strength of our own persuasions which can by itself give it that stamp. The bent of our own minds may favour it as much as we please ; that may shew it to be a fondling of our own, but will by no means prove it to be an offspring of Heaven, and of divine original.”

In contemplating what I have done, and in examining what I have written, by the rule of this

sagacious and good man, it appears to me that I have acted as a Christian, and have “spoken forth the words of truth and soberness:”—and I must again entreat you, if I have departed from these, to point out to me my errors.

I fear you will think me censorious in including under the same charge of encouraging war, the amiable and pious Fenelon; but I bow to your reproof, if you think my censure unmerited. In the very interesting adventures of Telemachus, the miseries and calamities of war are described with much feeling and eloquence; but no young person, whose mind is not already powerfully imbued with the precepts of Christianity, is likely to rise from its perusal, without considering military heroes as the first and best of human beings, rather than the scourges of a guilty world; and Mentor and his pupil as objects of imitation, far more captivating than Jesus and his apostles. This elegant little work is written in such a spirit of piety and benevolence, as to steal from us our confidence, and banish every suspicion that the most deadly poison to Christianity, lurks under so fair and pleasing an exterior. From its being extensively read in schools, this work has fanned the flame of military ardour in different nations. It is peculiarly calculated, not only to infuse into the minds of boys a thirst for military fame, but, which is no less to be deprecated, to render mothers and daughters admirers of military heroes. By reading works of this kind, the old and young of both sexes have been brought to contemplate the slaughter of human beings, not



only with indifference, but with approbation. The reading of this fascinating work, in early life, had a powerful tendency to produce in myself an ardent desire of military fame; a desire, I now think, irreconcilable with the discharge of the obvious duties of a disciple of Christ.

At the commencement of the French revolution, it was the fashion, as you may perfectly recollect, to attribute that event, and its calamities, to the writings of Voltaire and other sceptics; but the cause was unequal to the effect; and, had the French princes and priests been really Christians, the shafts of men like Voltaire would have been perfectly harmless. The French court during the reign of Louis XIV. was vicious and profligate in the extreme. That monarch (like many of his predecessors) possessed little of Christianity but the name. The intervening regency, with the reign of Louis XV. made the cup of vice overflow; and the storm burst upon the head of a comparatively virtuous man. It may, however, be remarked, that Louis XVI. not only hastened the fatal catastrophe, but that he did it, in some measure, from following the advice of Fenelon (or Mentor) to Telemachus. Not satisfied with maintaining the lawfulness of defensive war, this prelate and Christian preceptor, lest the dire spirit of war should cool or evaporate, and subjects become effeminate or unskilful in the science of human slaughter, recommended that some of the nobility should, in time of national peace, be employed in fighting the battles of other countries. This advice is so directly at variance

with the spirit of the Gospel of peace, and forms such a striking contrast to the example of Jesus and his apostles, that I think it necessary to quote his own words.

“ Il faut, disoit il, (*Mentor*) avoir soin pendant la paix de multiplier le peuple ; mais de peur que toute la nation ne s’amolisse, et ne tombe dans l’ignorance de la guerre, il faut envoyer dans les guerres etrangères la jeune noblesse. Ceux là suffisent pour entretenir toute la nation dans une emulation de gloire, dans l’amour des armes, dans le mepris des fatigues, et de la mort même, enfin dans l’experience de l’art militaire.”

The *noblesse* that Louis XVI. sent into America, though not exactly for the purpose mentioned by Fenelon, yet to fight the battles of foreigners, imbibed the spirit of revolution ; and, upon their return into France, disseminated it with great rapidity, among a people previously prepared for its reception. Had it not been for this interference of Louis XVI. his calamities might have been delayed, perhaps prevented. However this may be, it is probable that Fenelon, by infusing a military spirit into the French princes, was instrumental in producing the revolution, as well as Voltaire, by his writings. But many of the French princes and priests were, no doubt, by their vices and irreligion, the authors of their own calamities ; as is generally the case both with nations and individuals.

Another cause of war, and which appears to have operated very powerfully in all ages, is the high estimation in which women of all ranks hold the military character. It is wisely and mercifully or-

dained by a benevolent Creator, that the sexes should place a high value upon the approbation of each other; and it cannot be too much deplored that females, from false principles of education, have been led to give a decided preference to military men. That the wives of Indians should give this preference to successful hunters or warriors cannot be a subject of wonder, for their safety and existence frequently depend upon the skill and valour of their husbands; but that this partiality, in civilized life, and in an enlightened age, should extend to women of cultivated minds, who read, and who profess to admire, the New Testament, is not so easy to be accounted for. It seems probable that this may arise, in no small measure, from the writings of authors such as I have noticed. However this may be, you will not deny that female approbation has done much to render the military profession, and war itself, popular. Few girls emerge from the nursery, without imbibing strong prepossessions in favour of a chivalrous or military spirit—a spirit which most authors, male or female, directly or indirectly applaud. Among these latter, I regret to say, we find the amiable author of *Practical Piety*. Speaking of public thanksgivings for national blessings, she says,

“How rarely in common society do we meet with any recognition of Omnipotence even in those striking and heart-rejoicing occasions, when with his own right hand, and with his holy arm, he hath gotten himself the victory. Let us never detract from the merit of our valiant leaders, but rather honour them the more for this manifestation of the divine



power in their favour; but let us never lose sight of him who teacheth their hands to war, and their fingers to fight."

These martial effusions seem peculiarly misplaced in a treatise on *Practical Piety*: and I cannot consider the news of thousands of our fellow-creatures being slain in battle, and hurried out of the world, into the presence of their Maker, as heart-rejoicing occasions; nor are victories to be invariably considered as marks of God's favour; otherwise, during a long series of years, Napoleon might be regarded as the highly-favoured of God. But, whilst we feel gratitude for victories, we ought to bear in mind that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth:" and the disciples of Christ ought never to forget, that the example of David, and other Jewish warriors, is no sanction to them. These lived under the old covenant, which permitted the law of retaliation—or an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But this is not permitted by the code of *practical piety* established by Jesus Christ. I need not observe to you, nor yet to Mrs. More, that the honour of building a temple to God was conferred upon Solomon, because he was *a man of peace*, and that his name *Solomon*, signifies *peaceful*: and the prayer of David to build this temple was rejected, because he had been "*a man of war, and had shed blood.*"

As men, in their intercourse with each other, are instructed to imitate the conduct of God towards mankind, and to "be merciful as he is merciful;" it becomes necessary, in order to obtain peaceable and amiable dispositions, that they should entertain

just notions concerning the character of our heavenly Father\*. If we err in this respect, we render erroneous the standard that he has graciously condescended to give us, for the regulation of our conduct. Those systems of religion, therefore, which represent God as less merciful than the Scriptures declare him to be, must have a tendency to make men less merciful than they ought to be ; and consequently, to feel less repugnance for war and bloodshed, than they otherwise would feel.

Politico-religious establishments, which degrade the character of our holy religion, by rendering it a state machine, instead of a source of moral improvement, necessarily impede and check its benign influence. And all establishments which, on account of authorized religious opinions, grant to a part of a nation peculiar privileges, or, on the contrary, subject others to pains, penalties, or privations for conscience' sake, have a direct tendency to promote feelings of enmity between individuals of different creeds ; and, instead of uniting, to divide a nation against itself in such a manner as to hasten its downfall. Every departure from the benevolent principles revealed in the Gospel, and every thing that tends to degrade it, appears, by the wise moral government of God, to carry with it its unavoidable punishment ; of the truth of this, Catholic and Protestant states alike afford evidence. These politico-religious establishments also tend to promote the baneful vices of avarice and ambition (the

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\* See Letter XIV. Paraphrase on Matt. v. 38—43.

fruitful sources of war), and to render Christians, who ought to be the most honourable and independent of all men, the obsequious tools of ambitious and unprincipled rulers. They fit men for war, or for any employment; and history tells us, the history of our own country in particular, that they have produced it; and that they are fundamentally subversive of peace. We seem unavoidably led to this conclusion, when we consider that Christianity, during nearly three centuries, produced a race of men, pious, peaceable, and unambitious; but, when it became the handmaid of the state, and its ministers possessed of riches and honours, the very reverse took place, justifying the remark (Matt. xix. 23.) of him who spake as never man spake.

But there is a more direct and positive violation of the precepts of the Gospel of peace, in some of these institutions. In one, which I need not point out to you by name, the ministers of Christ, before they can legally exercise their functions, must explicitly declare, that "it is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the magistrate, to wear weapons, and to serve in wars." Whether this is rendering the commandment of God of none effect by the ordinances of man, or saying that the Scriptures have not stated the commandment of God with sufficient precision, I leave you to decide. If magistrates or princes possess this power, they seem to be placed out of the pale of Christian obedience; and those who serve under the most unprincipled tyrants and plunderers, have no account to render unto God. Such ordinances of men seem



to render the precepts of Christ a dead letter. They make of man—man created in the image of God, and commanded to imitate his Creator in acts of benevolence—a mere tool and a puppet, for the use or amusement of ambitious magistrates and statesmen. They make princes, who have sins of their own in abundance to account for, answerable also for the sins of their subjects; though God, who is no respecter of persons, has declared by his prophet, that “no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.” Whether, also, these ordinances are opposed to the plain and positive command of our Lord, to “render unto God the things that are God’s,” I leave you to decide.

I shall, for the present, take my leave of this subject, by observing, that till Christianity, or the knowledge of the Lord, “shall cover the earth,” and accomplish those glorious events predicted in prophecy, we may safely infer that there is something fundamentally wrong, not only in the systems of education, but also in the religious systems of all *belligerent Christians*, which prevents the fulfilment of these prophecies; for, on the wise principle laid down by our Saviour, “a good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit.” But what fruit can we expect from a religion which sanctifies war; and what ambitious conqueror could ask for more from a subservient clergy, than this article accords? It is an *article of war*, not an *article of peace*, as these Articles have been ingeniously designated.

Volumes might be written on the causes of war. War itself may be considered as prolific; and one

war has generally laid the foundation of another, with a certainty as undeviating as that of seed sown producing a crop. The animosities and hatreds consequent on one war, have seldom been suffered to die away, so short have been the intervals of peace ! Princes, and French princes to their sorrow, appear systematically to have followed the advice of Fenelon, in cultivating an emulation for military glory. Trophies of victories, if not directly productive of hostility, tend to keep alive feelings of irritation, of enmity, and ambition, which Christians ought, by all means, to labour to subdue. This is a duty peculiarly appertaining to the clergy, who, in our own times, do not appear to have benefited much from the exhortations of Erasmus, who three centuries ago thus expressed himself :

“ The clergy, so far from acting as the servants of Christ, in the manner I have recommended, do not hesitate to hang up flags, standards, banners, and other trophies of war, brought from the field of carnage, as ornaments of churches, and great cathedrals\*. These trophies shall be all stained and smeared with the blood of men for whom Christ shed his most precious blood, and shall be hung in the aisles of the churches, among the tombs and images of apostles and martyrs, as if in future it were to be reckoned a mark of sanctity not to suffer martyrdom, but to inflict it ; not to lay down one’s own life for the truth, but to take away the life of others for worldly purposes of vanity and avarice. It would be quite sufficient if the bloody rags were hung up in some corner of the Exchange, or kept as curiosities in a chest or closet, out of sight ; disgraceful monuments as they are of

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\* This has been done in the present century, and sanctioned by the highest dignitaries, ecclesiastical and civil.

human depravity. The church, which ought to be kept perfectly pure, and emblematic of the purest of religions, should not be defiled with any thing stained with the blood of man, shed by the hand of man, alienated, as is clear by the very act, both from Christ and from nature.

“But you argue in defence of this indecent practice of hanging up flags or colours, as they are called, in churches, that the ancients used to deposit the monuments of their victories in the temples of their gods. It is true ;—but what were their gods but demons delighting in blood and impurity? Not the God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Never let priests dedicated to a God like this, have anything to do with war, unless to put an end to it, and promote love and reconciliation. If the clergy were but unanimous in such sentiments, if they would inculcate them every where, there is no doubt, notwithstanding the secular arm, that their authority, personal and professional, would have a preponderance against the influence of courts and ministers of state, and thus prevent war, the calamity of human nature.”—*Complaint of Peace*, pages 56, 57.

If the exhibition of pictures, or images of pious and good men in places dedicated to the service of God, are justly regarded as derogatory to his honour, and to that purity and simplicity of worship which he requires ; how much more so must we consider the exhibition of flags stained with human blood, and placed *over altars* dedicated to “the God of all peace.” The former may excite pious and devout sensations ; but the latter, placed by consecrated hands where the abomination of desolation was planted by pagans, are calculated, and seem purposely intended, to promote the very character which our Saviour shed his blood to banish from the earth ; for I cannot too often repeat to you, that



“no two things can be more different than the heroic and Christian characters.” That such practices should have existed in the days of Erasmus, when to preach *prostration of the understanding* and that *kings could do no moral wrong*, were considered as legitimate duties by the clergy, in return for their secular benefits : but that such things should take place in the nineteenth century, and in a nation professing a reformed system of Christianity, is most deeply to be deplored. Our commentators on the prophecies, with telescopic eyes, examine distant shores to find out the famed arch-enemy of mankind, *antichrist*. But do not facts such as have been alluded to, show that British commentators need not travel so far from home ? These facts, and the more lamentable one of being so often engaged in war, tell us, in language sufficiently plain, that a “mystery of iniquity\*,” as in the days of St. Paul, operates with us ; and that “he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.”

It may, after noticing these things, have the appearance of captiousness, or fastidiousness, to speak of those acts of our rulers that are generally popular, and intended to exalt our national character ; but it seems difficult to reconcile with correct Christian feelings and principles, the erection of monuments, of bridges, of streets, as memorials of our victories. The adoption of this custom was nearly producing fatal consequences at Paris, in the year 1814, when the Prussians were with difficulty re-

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\* 2 Thes. ii. 7.

strained from blowing up (I believe) the bridge of Austerlitz. These national trophies have not only a tendency to keep alive a martial spirit at home, but they produce feelings of envy and hatred in the breasts of those whom it is our duty and interest, as Christians, to conciliate and *love*. What Frenchman passing through some of our streets, or over some of our bridges, will entertain for us feelings of kindness, affection, and esteem? Will he not rather hate us, and wish for opportunities of humbling us to the dust? The wise man says, "Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him." Had our pious ancestors, as they are often termed, instead of binding the sovereign by his coronation oath to preserve inviolate certain speculative dogmas, made it imperative upon him to take for his "*SOLE guide the precepts of our holy religion, namely, the precepts of justice, Christian charity, and peace*," we should have heard of no Waterloo bridges or Waterloo places,—nor would the cry of our Catholic brethren for emancipation have now been heard among us! Discord would have been banished from our land, and brotherly love and charity, "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace," would have been established as the sacred bonds of union between the Catholic and the Protestant, the Churchman and the Dissenter. Such a pledge from the sovereign, instead of laying the foundation of dissension, like the present coronation oath, would have prepared the way for all Protest-

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\* See Letter to the King, page 21.

ants, Catholics, and Dissenters becoming one body under one head, namely Christ.

To sum up the real causes of war in a few words, I should say that every thing anti-christian—every thing that opposes the reception of Christianity, or that has a tendency to weaken its beneficial effects upon nations or individuals, whether arising from false and erroneous doctrines, or from making Christianity subservient to human policy, may be considered as an indirect cause of war; Christianity being appointed by God to put an end to war, and to establish universal peace and righteousness on earth. This being the case, it becomes the bounden duty of every good man, but more especially of every Christian minister, by every lawful means in his power, to labour to remove every impediment to the establishment of uncorrupted Christianity, and universal peace. The former may be regarded as the tree, the latter as the fruit. The latter cannot be good without the former is in a healthy state. Is it not therefore evident that, in every belligerent nation, the sacred tree should be managed agreeably to the directions given by our Lord? (See Luke xiii. 8.)

The great cause of war, and of its concomitant evils is, no doubt, irreligion. If we consider the miseries now suffering in Turkey and Greece, which call forth so much of our sympathy, we must unavoidably trace them to this origin. If we turn our attention to the sufferings of Catholic states in the South of Europe, we must draw the same conclusion. Their sufferings appear to be the conse-



quence of their disobedience to the precepts of the religion of Jesus ; and between their sufferings and those of the Jews, though different in degree, a parallel may be drawn. The commandment delivered by Moses is, in some measure, applicable to Christians as well as Jews : “If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day ; all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee.”—Deut. xxviii.

15. We are authorized to apply this to Christians ; for Saint Paul, after mentioning the sins and punishments of the Jews, says, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples ; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

If, therefore, Protestants attribute the sufferings of Turks, Greeks, and Catholics to irreligion, ought they not to look to themselves ; and must they not attribute the minor sufferings they have endured to the same cause ? Have they profited as they ought to have done by their holy religion ? Have they improved the superior talents committed to their care ? Have they cultivated “the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ?” That existing civil and religious institutions in any Protestant state have not produced these Christian fruits, is a melancholy truth ; and probably, unless they receive the culture already mentioned, (Luke xiii. 8.) they never will subdue those *lusts* which produce war, viz. pride, envy, malice, covetousness, and

uncharitableness. The consideration of this important subject cannot be too much pressed upon the statesman, the patriot, the divine, and the philanthropist, who may be assured, that whatever promotes real Christianity will have a tendency to promote universal peace; and whatever checks the progress of Christianity, will be *a cause of war*.

When we consider the talents and influence of a host of advocates in favour of war, and the various and powerful causes that operate to produce it, and also to keep alive a military spirit, any attempt to stem the torrent of interest, of fashion, and delusion, that has prevailed for so many ages, seems almost an Utopian undertaking. But the Christian philosopher and philanthropist need not despair; he has the spirit of prophecy, "the testimony of Jesus," for his polar star: and it is delightful to contemplate the realization of these precepts, the accomplishment of these prophecies, which, in the coming periods of the world, we are taught to expect, and to expect without a possibility of being disappointed. These days may be remote, or they may be near, even at our doors. This we know, that it is the will of God that such days shall arrive; that they are designed by him to promote his glory, and the happiness of his creatures;—can any Christian minister, therefore, my dear sir, entertain a reasonable doubt, of its being his bounden duty to labour in the cause of peace—of universal *peace*, and *good-will among men* of all nations?

I am, &c. &c.

## LETTER IV.

### ON THE PHYSICAL EVILS OF WAR.

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"Where strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."—*James iii.* 16.

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MY DEAR SIR,

CONSIDERING the Gospel of Christ as a system of religion and morals contrived and intended by the great Ruler of the world to render men virtuous and happy; and regarding war as destructive of every virtuous and moral principle which the Gospel inculcates, we must contemplate its existence as one of the greatest evils in this our probationary state.

The evils occasioned by war may be divided into physical and moral. The former, though tremendous, may be considered as trifling, when compared with the latter; and nothing can be more just than the remark of our admirable female bard, that

"War's least horror is the ensanguin'd field."

The laws of Omnipotence are so wisely and benevolently framed, that obedience to them may be considered as the road to happiness; and the disobeying them, the path to misery. Contemplating the evils arising from war as correctional punish-



ments, intended for our benefit, the ways of God may be regarded as both just and merciful: but to look upon them as evils happening in the usual and established course of God's providence, and unavoidable by man, appears to be little short of gross impiety, as well as expressive of a disbelief in prophecy, one of the main pillars of Christianity.—The physical or minor evils of war will form the subject of my present letter.

If we estimate the number of men that are employed for the purpose of war, to be merely so many human beings subtracted from the mass of mankind, and their labour, as to any valuable purpose, lost to the world, the evil is one of no trifling magnitude; and its existence leads us to the humiliating conclusion, that men are either less wise, or less humane, than the brute creation. Allowing the average number of troops, in time of war and peace, in Europe, to amount to three millions: for each of these individuals, we may probably reckon the labour of two others to support him in food, clothing, &c.; as well as to build ships, construct forts, and to perform other work connected with war. This will take away nine or ten millions of men, all in the prime and vigour of manhood, from all profitable labour. To this may be added the labour and food of at least a million of horses. Did the loss of so much labour and food procure general peace and safety, this loss would be little to be regretted; but, instead of doing this, history tells us that armies have kept the world in a state of fever and irritation, and have been the means of inflicting upon it

evils the most horrible and extensive. With these, volumes might be filled. A few of recent date will be exhibited.

Lord Kames, a writer of some celebrity, says that

“Humanity, it must be acknowledged, gains nothing from wars of small states in close neighbourhood : such wars are brutal and bloody, because they are carried on with bitter enmity against individuals. Thanks to Providence, that war at present bears a less savage aspect : we spare individuals, and make war upon the nation only : barbarity and cruelty give place to magnanimity ; and soldiers are converted from brutes into heroes. Such wars give exercise to the elevated courage and disinterestedness, which are always attended with consciousness of merit and dignity.”

As Lord Kames, the avowed advocate of war, that is, upon a large scale, admits that other wars are brutal and bloody,—which none will deny,—I shall confine the remarks and examples I have to offer, chiefly to war upon a scale of magnificence. It will, however, be rather difficult to show how, in conducting this kind of warfare, individuals can be spared and a nation punished, as a nation is composed of individuals. It will be no less difficult to show how, in wars of this description, “barbarity and cruelty give place to magnanimity,” or that “soldiers are converted from brutes into heroes.”

The expedition of Napoleon to Moscow may be considered as a species of warfare upon a scale of magnificence, to suit the fastidious taste of Lord Kames ; and a few extracts from the narratives of

the Russian campaign will suffice to show that the great difference between wars upon a large scale and those upon a small one, is, that the barbarities and cruelties attending the former, are in proportion to the magnitude of the scale on which a war is conducted, and that the kind of advantages dreamt of by Lord Kames are things of rare occurrence.

Passing over the sanguinary battles of Smolensko and Borodino, in the latter of which 80,000 men and 25,000 horses were killed, I come to the destruction of Moscow, and give you the following extract from the work of Sir R. K. Porter :

“The French troops, as they poured into this devoted city, had spread themselves in every direction in search of plunder; and in their progress, they committed outrages so horrid on the persons of all whom they discovered, that fathers, desperate to save their children from pollution, would set fire to their places of refuge, and find a surer asylum in the flames.

“The streets, the houses, the cellars flowed with blood, and were filled with violation and carnage. Manhood seemed to be lost in the French soldier; for nothing was discerned in him but the wild beast ravening for prey; or rather the fiend of hell, gluttoning himself in the commission of every horrible crime.”

Labauve, on the same subject, says :

“The most heart-rending scene which my imagination had ever conceived, far surpassing the most afflicting accounts in ancient or modern history, now presented itself before our eyes. A great part of the population of Moscow, frightened at our arrival, had concealed themselves in cellars, or secret recesses of their houses. As the fire spread around,



we saw them rushing in despair from their various asylums. They uttered no imprecations, they breathed no complaints, but carrying with them their most precious effects, fled before the flames. Others of greater sensibility, and actuated by the genuine feelings of nature, saved only their children, who were clasped closely in their arms. Many old people, borne down with grief rather than by age, had not sufficient strength to follow their families, and expired near the houses in which they were born.

“Desirous of terminating the recital of this horrid catastrophe, for which history wants expressions, and poetry has no colours, I shall pass over in silence many circumstances revolting to humanity, and merely describe the dreadful confusion which arose in our army, when the fire had reached every part of Moscow, and the whole city was become one immense flame.

“A long row of carriages was perceived through the thick smoke, loaded with booty. Being too heavily laden for the exhausted cattle to drag them along, they were obliged to halt at every step, when we heard the execrations of the drivers, who, terrified at the surrounding flames, endeavoured to push forward, with dreadful outcries. The soldiers were still armed, diligently employed in forcing open every door. They seemed to fear lest they should leave any house untouched. In spite of the extreme peril which threatened them, the love of plunder induced our soldiers to brave every danger. Stimulated by an irresistible desire of pillage, they precipitated themselves into the flames. They waded in blood, treading upon the dead bodies without remorse, whilst the ruins of the houses, mixed with burning coals, fell thick on their murderous hands.”

These extracts show the evils suffered by the Russians, in war upon *a large scale*:—the miseries experienced by the French were by no means inferior to them.

On the 19th of October, they began their disastrous retreat. On the 25th, a battle was fought which was most destructive to them. On the 30th, says Labaume,

“The nearer we approached the Majaisk, the more desolate the country appeared. But most horrible was the multitude of dead bodies which, deprived of burial fifty-two days, scarcely retained the human form. On arriving at Borodino, my consternation was inexpressible at finding the 20,000 men, who had perished there, lying uncovered.”

November 6th.—“The soldiers vainly struggling with the snow and the wind, which rushed upon them with the violence of a whirlwind, could no longer distinguish the road; and falling into the ditches which bordered it, found a grave. How many unfortunate beings on this dreadful day, dying of cold and famine, struggled hard with the agonies of death. Stretched on the road, we could distinguish only the heaps of snow which covered them, and which, at almost every step, formed little undulations like so many graves.”—“The Cossacs came to the succour of the peasants, and drove back to the great road, already filled with the dying and the dead, those who escaped from the carnage made among them. Tormented with hunger, we saw them run after every horse the moment it fell. They devoured it like dogs, and fought among themselves for the mangled limbs.”

November 13th.—“It was horrible to see and hear the enormous dogs with shaggy hair, which, driven from the villages we had burned, followed us along our march. Dying with hunger, they uttered one incessant and frightful howl, and often disputed with the soldiers the carcasses of the horses which fell in the route. In addition to this, the ravens, attracted by the scent of dead bodies, hovered over us in black and innumerable crowds, and by their cries of mournful presage, struck the stoutest hearts with terror.

“Happily we were but two leagues from Smolensko. But what was our grief, when we heard that the ninth corps was gone, and that the provisions were all consumed. A thunderbolt falling at our feet would have confounded us less than did this news.”

November 28th.—The wreck of the French army arrived at the Beresina; and Labaume says, “Now began a frightful contention between the foot-soldiers, and the horsemen. Many perished by the hands of their comrades, but a greater number were suffocated at the head of the bridge; and the dead bodies of men and horses so choked every avenue, that it was necessary to climb over mountains of carcasses to arrive at the river. Some who were buried in these horrible heaps, still breathed, and struggling with the agonies of death, caught hold of those who mounted over them; but these kicked them with violence to disengage themselves, and without remorse trod them under foot.

“At length the Russians advanced in a mass. At the sight of the enemy, the artillery, the baggage-waggons, the cavalry, and the foot-soldiers, all pressed on, contending which should pass first. The strongest threw into the river those who were weaker, and hindered their passage, or unfeelingly trampled underfoot all the sick they found in their way. Many hundreds were crushed to death by the wheels of the cannon. Thousands and thousands of victims, deprived of all hope, threw themselves headlong into the Beresina, and were lost in the waves.”

December 4th.—“The route was covered with soldiers, who no longer retained the human form, and whom the enemy disdained to make prisoners. Some had lost their hearing, others their speech; and many, by excessive cold and hunger, were reduced to a state of frantic stupidity, in which they roasted the dead bodies of their comrades, or even gnawed their own hands and arms. Some were so weak, that, unable to lift a piece of wood, or roll a stone towards the fires which they had kindled, they sat down upon the



dead bodies of their comrades, and, with a haggard countenance, steadfastly gazed upon the burning coals. No sooner was the fire extinguished, than these living spectres, unable to rise, fell by the side of those on whom they had sat. We saw many who were absolutely insane. To warm their frozen feet, they plunged them naked into the middle of the fire. Some, with a convulsive laugh, threw themselves into the flames, and perished in the most horrible convulsions, and uttering the most piercing cries; while others, equally insane, immediately followed them, and experienced the same fate."

"On the morning of the 13th of December, of 400,000 warriors, who had crossed the Niemen at the opening of the campaign scarcely 20,000 men repassed it, of whom at least two-thirds had not seen the Kremlin. Arrived at the opposite bank, like ghosts returned from the infernal regions, we fearfully looked behind us and beheld with horror the savage countries where we had suffered so much."

Here, my dear Sir, is "a war for glory," between two large empires remote from each other; the kind of war which Lord Kames terms "the school of every manly virtue;" "in which barbarity gives place to magnanimity, and soldiers are converted into heroes!!"

In contemplating the complicated scenes here described of vice, of cruelty, and suffering, we are naturally and insensibly led to ask who was the author of these calamities. The answer, I anticipate, will be Napoleon. It is readily allowed, that he is to be regarded as the great *primum mobile* of them. But, admitting God to be the great Ruler of the world, I would ask you, was not every individual in that vast army, whether officer of high rank or private soldier—was not every man who assisted in plan-

ning this stupendous and unjust invasion —nay, was not every clerk in the war departments, who assisted in writing letters, or in forwarding this wicked enterprise, a partaker, in the sight of a just Ruler, in the guilt of their superior, and will not God call them *individually* to account? Are not all these accountable beings? accountable in the first place to God for all their actions? Man, the noblest of all the works of God, is “made in the image of God.”—He is not to be regarded, nor is he to regard himself, as one of the brute creation, or as a mere piece of mechanism, to be wound up and set a-going at the pleasure of another. God has graciously given him, along with his revealed will, an understanding and a conscience for his guides, and to these directors he is, at his peril, to attend. But neglecting these sacred guides, men have become blind followers of blind leaders, and hence have arisen many of the complicated evils that have deluged the world with blood, and retarded the spread of Christianity and civilization.

It is possible that had there been found in that immense army only a few individuals, and these even in the lowest ranks, who, possessing the courage of the primitive martyrs, and obedient to conscience, (like the centurion Marcellus, of whom I shall hereafter have occasion to speak,) had nobly stood forward, and said that they were ready to suffer death, rather than engage in an unjust and cruel war——had this been the case, it is possible that the progress of the tyrant might have been arrested. This, however, is a certain Christian truth, that

had there been only *one* solitary individual among 400,000 men, who thought that the precepts of Jesus forbad him to take any part in such a war, it was the duty of that single being to act as did Marcellus. Such a man, in the best sense of the word, would have been a Christian martyr : he would have borne his testimony and have suffered in the best of causes : he would have escaped hardships exceeding description : instead of being forgotten, or thought of with sentiments of execration, his memory would have been held in honour by every good man ; and, what surpasses all, he would have secured to himself the approbation of his future Judge.

You will, perhaps, remark that this line of conduct would destroy all subordination and military discipline, render armies useless, and be dangerous to the *interests of all states*. To this I can only answer, that an opposite conduct is destructive of Christianity, the great bulwark of national and individual safety. If Christians believe in the truth of their religion, if they indeed believe that God is the moral Ruler and Governor of the world, let them be consistent, and consider all national safety as precarious and uncertain, which is not founded upon implicit obedience to his revealed will.

If these remarks are in the spirit of a reformer, are they not also in the spirit of Jesus, who tells his disciples not to “fear them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather to fear Him which is able to kill both soul and body in hell ?” If those who advocate the cause of “peace on earth,” are to be taunted, they have the consolation of know-



ing that this may secure them the approbation and favour of God.—“Blessed are ye, (says our Saviour,) when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward.”

As you lay some stress upon the interests of empires being endangered, allow me to ask you, if you can mention one nation in Europe, the interests, nay the very existence of which has not, by the war system, been placed in the most imminent peril during the last thirty or forty years? Have they not all placed their dependence upon *the sword*?—How many of these nations may now say that “they have trusted to the staff of this bruised reed, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it\*!!”

Should it be remarked that the army of Napoleon was composed of mercenary troops of various nations, and drawn together by compulsion; and therefore more unprincipled than other armies,—I would observe, that all armies are much alike, and that men who barter their moral freedom, and unconditionally sell themselves as soldiers to *Cæsar*, lose the restraints which Christianity imposes, and can no longer be relied on as moral agents. They have in all ages been the enslavers of mankind, and it seems to be an immutable law of Omnipotence, that they ever shall be so; and that those “who take the sword, shall perish with the sword.”

Having noticed the atrocities of the troops under

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\* 2 Kings xviii. 21.

Napoleon, it is proper that I should also speak of the conduct of British troops, when placed in a situation which is supposed to sanction a departure from the rules of strict military discipline; and it is with very painful feelings I transcribe the following account of the transactions attending the storming of St. Sebastian, extracted from a very popular periodical work : (*Blackwood's Magazine*.)

“The enemy having reserved their fire till the head of their column had gained the middle of the stream, then opened with the most deadly effect. Grape, cannister, musketry, shells, grenades, and every species of missile, were hurled from the ramparts, beneath which our gallant fellows dropped like corn before the reaper; insomuch, that in the space of two minutes, the river was literally choked up with the bodies of the killed and wounded, over whom, without discrimination, the advancing divisions pressed on.”

After having, with great loss, established themselves within the walls of the city, the narrator continues :

“As soon as the fighting began to wax faint, the horrors of plunder and rapine succeeded. Fortunately there were few females in the place; but of the fate of the few which were there, I cannot even now think without a shudder. The houses were every where ransacked, the furniture wantonly broken, the churches profaned, the images dashed to pieces; wine and spirit cellars broken open, and the troops, heated already with angry passions, became absolutely mad by intoxication. All order and discipline were abandoned. The officers had no longer the slightest control over their men, who, on the contrary, controlled the officers; nor is it by any means certain, that several of the latter did not fall by the hands of the former, when they vainly attempted to bring them back to a sense of subordination.”

After describing the burning and plundering of the city during the night, and the brutality and intoxication of the troops, the narrator continues :

“ Of these various noises, the greater number now began to subside, as night passed on ; and long before dawn, there was a fearful silence. Sleep succeeded inebriety with the bulk of the army : of the poor wretches who groaned and shrieked three hours ago, many had expired ; and the very fire had almost wasted itself, by consuming every thing upon which it could feed. Nothing, therefore, could now be heard, except an occasional faint moan, scarcely distinguishable from the heavy breathing of the sleepers ; and even that was soon heard no more.”——“ It is impossible to describe, with any degree of fidelity, the appearance which St. Sebastian presented, when the dawn of the 1st of September rendered objects visible. The streets, which had lately been covered with the living as well as the dead, were now left to the occupation of the latter ; and these were so numerous, that it puzzled the beholder to guess where so many sleeping men could have found room to lie. The troops, however, returned not, with the return of light, to their accustomed state of discipline. Their strength being recruited, and their senses restored, they applied themselves, with greater diligence than ever, to the business of plunder. Of the houses, few now remained, except in a state of ruin ; but even the ruins were explored with the most rapacious eagerness, not so much for jewels and other valuables, as for wine and spirits.”

I cannot take my leave of these painful and disgraceful transactions, without asking you if it is possible for those who acknowledge that God is merciful, just, and wise, and that HE watches over the affairs of the world, to believe that any nation can be in a state of permanent safety which depends on



a military force. To imagine this, seems no less than to libel and defame the mercy, the justice, and wisdom of God.

Concerning the magnitude of the physical evils of war, no one appears to have entertained more correct ideas than our eloquent orator and admired author, Mr. Burke, who, in his *Vindication of Natural Society*, says :

“It is an incontestible truth, that there is more havoc made in one year by men, than has been made by all the lions, tigers, panthers, ounces, leopards, hyenas, rhinoceroses, elephants, bears, and wolves, since the beginning of the world ; though these agree ill enough with each other, and have a much greater proportion of rage and fury in their composition than we have.”——The same great man also says : “The number of human beings who have been slain in battles, and have perished in a no less miserable manner by the other destructive consequences of war, from the beginning of the world to the time at which he was writing, amounted to at least *seventy times the number of souls on the globe !*”

After contemplating physical evils such as I have stated, it seems unnecessary to notice a subject so comparatively trifling as the money expenses of war. But when wars upon a large scale are persevered in for a number of years, the debt incurred by them must, in the end, become so enormous as to occasion national bankruptcy, and along with it civil commotions, and a suspension of law and social order. To effect this, was, no doubt, the favourite object of Napoleon in our late dreadful struggle ; and had not his victories got the better of his judgement, his war against our finances must have succeeded.

The expenses for the support of civil government and regal splendour, upon the most magnificent scale, are altogether insignificant when compared with those of war. The former may be compared to the household expenses of a man of wealth, which injure not his fortune; the latter to those of a gambler, which no fortune, however splendid, can maintain. The expenses of war, may, however, on one principle, namely, *the balance of power*, be considered as a blessing to great and powerful nations: for to these expenses they have often been indebted, if not for peace, for occasional cessation of hostilities. In times past, poverty appears to have been the only effectual barrier to the ambition of princes, and to a state of perpetual warfare; and, instead of national wealth, exhausted treasuries have been the surest promoters of the interests of humanity. Frederic the Great says: "Exhausted treasuries are at length the production of peace, which ought to be the work of humanity, not of necessity." I do not suppose I exceed the truth in estimating our expenses, during the last war, at a larger sum than would have comfortably clothed and fed all the poor persons in Europe, during the continuance of the war! Had the money been thus employed, we might have purchased friends, instead of creating jealous rivals. This waste of wealth shows that, if men want the necessaries of life, it arises from human folly and wickedness; for it may safely be asserted that, as far as depends upon God, he has made abundant provision for a larger population than has yet inhabited the earth.

You will, my dear sir, perhaps say, that in estimating the physical evils of war, by the miseries experienced in the Russian campaign, I have selected an extreme case, and that I have thereby exaggerated these evils. I admit there is some justice in such a remark; but it would be an easy matter to show that misery to individuals is, with few exceptions, the general consequence of war, whether upon a large or a small scale: but finding that I have already exceeded the bounds of a letter, I beg to refer you to a work containing much information on that particular subject: it is intitled *Pictures of War by IRENICUS\**. Whilst I am on this subject, permit me to take the further liberty of recommending to your perusal, *An Inquiry into the Accordancy of War with the Principles of Christianity*†. Also the *Herald of Peace*, and the *eight Tracts* ‡ published by the London Peace Society. These latter you may have for a very small sum, and the perusal of them must afford pleasure to every sincere lover of the Prince of Peace.

But, my dear sir, not only is the field of battle, and an actual campaign like that in Russia, one continued scene of suffering, but war, in its various stages, inflicts hardships, privations, death. Of this our great lexicographer, Dr. Johnson, appears to have entertained more correct notions than Lord Kames.

“It is wonderful,” says the former, “with what coolness

\* Sold by Longman and Co. London, and W. Alexander, York.

† Longman and Co.

‡ Hatchard and Son.



and indifference the greater part of mankind see war commenced. Those that hear of it at a distance, or read of it in books, but have never presented its evils to their minds, consider it as little more than a splendid game, a proclamation, an army, a battle, and a triumph. Some, indeed, must perish in the most successful field; but they die upon the bed of honour, resign their lives amidst the joys of conquest, and filled with England's glory, smile in death. The life of a modern soldier is ill represented by heroic fiction. War has means of destruction more formidable than the cannon and the sword. Of the thousands and ten thousands, that perished in our late contests with France and Spain, a very small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy. The rest languished in tents and ships amidst damps and putrefactions, gasping and groaning, unpitied by men made obdurate by long continuance of hopeless misery: and were at last whelmed in pits, or heaved into the ocean, without notice and without remembrance. By incommodious encampments and unwholesome stations, where courage is useless, and enterprise impracticable, fleets are silently dispeopled, and armies sluggishly melted away."

These are not merely the sentiments of a recluse or a scholar in his closet; the history of the late war, and indeed of every war, affords similar examples in abundance.—I will give you one from the pen of an eye-witness, whose writings show him to be alike intitled to our confidence and our esteem. The author of the *Recollections in the Peninsula*, p. 5, says :

" One thousand and seventy bayonets, all fine sized, efficient men, then mustered under our colours. My regiment has never been very roughly handled in the field, although it has borne handsome share of honourable peril. But alas! what between sickness, suffering, and the sword, few, very

few of those men are now in existence. We had yearly supplies of men from the depôt; they too have, for the most part, *disappeared*.”—The humane author himself was detained by sickness some months from his regiment, and was nearly falling its victim.—“About the close of March,” he says, “being perfectly restored to health, I rejoined my regiment. Alas! when I came to stand on the parade, for how many a face did my eye enquire in vain :—in the space of four short months my regiment had buried nearly three hundred men, all in the prime of life and vigour of manhood. They had fallen victims to the sickly season in Estramadura.”

The miseries and calamities of the late war, recorded as they have been, by eye-witnesses, and those men of science, virtue, and humanity, seem peculiarly calculated, in a reading age like the present, to produce in the minds of thinking men of the military profession, a loathing and abhorrence of war. Mr. Edgeworth says :

“Martial enthusiasm, and a philosophic, humane love of peace, are incompatible; therefore military pupils should not be made philosophers, else they cease to be soldiers,—and then how can we be defended? An officer can no more be certain of never being called upon to fight in an unjust cause, than a lawyer can be certain that he will never be obliged to plead on the wrong side of the question.”

This seems to be saying little more than what we may infer from pagan writers of antiquity : and Mr. Edgeworth might, in few words, with more point, and equal truth, have said, that when men become Christians, they will “cease to learn war,” and “will beat their swords into ploughshares.” Men imbued with just sentiments and Christian feelings like the estimable author of *Recollections*, &c.

(and I trust there are many such both in the army and navy,) must, in time, discover that *they* are the instruments whereby the calamities of war are inflicted ; and that they, as well as their rulers, must answer for these things at the bar of a just judge. The time will arrive, when poets need no longer sing the plaintive strains of our peaceful bard :

“ . . . . My ear is pained,  
My soul is sick with every day's report  
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.  
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,  
It does not feel for man :—  
Then what is man ? And what man seeing this,  
And having human feelings, does not blush  
And hang his head to find himself a man ?

May our poets of the present day, like COWPER, “labour for peace ;” and may the GOD OF PEACE bless their labours, is the sincere prayer of,

Yours faithfully.



## LETTER V.

### ON THE MORAL EVILS OF WAR.

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“ Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”—*James ii. 10.*

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MY DEAR SIR,

THE world has been so long familiar with war and vice, that it requires very nice discrimination to ascertain which is the cause, and which the effect ; for they appear to have produced and re-produced each other, with little intermission, for a succession of ages. From history we may gather, that vicious nations have generally been addicted to war ; and war-like nations to vice. If, therefore, ministers of the Gospel can preach down war, they will shut the great flood-gate that has deluged the world with vice : or, if they can preach down vice, they will banish from the world the greatest evil with which it has pleased God to afflict it. You cannot, my dear sir, on the principles of Dr. Paley\*, preach the doctrines of Christ, without inculcating a spirit directly the reverse of that which is required to form a hero. Nor can you teach men to pray in the spirit in which Christ taught men to pray, with-

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\* See Letter I. page 32.

out inclining them to forgive, not to slaughter their enemies.

The inseparable connexion there is between one vice and many others ; or, if you please, between war and a multitude of vices, seems to justify the remark of the apostle, that, "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all." The system of Christian morals, which is admirably calculated to make men virtuous and happy, may, perhaps, not unfitly be compared to a machine consisting of various wheels and movements, one of which being put out of order, the whole will be deranged. In like manner, if one of the commands of God, or one of those wise laws by which He governs the world, be broken or suspended, the whole moral machine will be disordered, and vice and misery supersede virtue and happiness. A celebrated philosopher and moralist \* observes, "That the virtues are all parts of a circle : whatever is humane is wise, whatever is wise is just : and whatever is wise, just, and humane, will be found to be the true interest of states." This aphorism of the philosopher is in unison with the motto I have selected ; and it is to be regretted, that a man whose general conduct appears to have been regulated by the precepts of the Christian religion, should have been insensible of the source from whence he had derived his wisdom and virtue.

Among the most potent, and, I will add, the most delightful of those laws whereby God binds man-

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\* Dr. Franklin.

kind together in social intercourse, administering at the same time to their virtue and happiness, is the sympathy and affection which, by his wise and benevolent appointment, prevails between the sexes. We are informed by the highest authority, that "*In the beginning, God made them male and female; and said, for this cause a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*"

Where this sympathy and affection are cultivated, or, in other words, where marriage is held in honour, whether by nations or individuals, virtue and happiness will generally be found to predominate; and, on the other hand, vice and misery will as generally result from the breach of this first law of Omnipotence. I shall therefore, instead of descanting on the moral evils of war, generally, which has already been done by many, confine the remarks I have to offer, chiefly to those evils which spring from the breach or neglect of the sacred ordinance of marriage. If I can show, which I think it will not be difficult to do, that war directly interferes with this institution, and that, in many instances, it sets aside this "great expedient for maintaining the moral order and social happiness of mankind;" it may safely be affirmed, that, "if it does not cause, it aggravates every evil, moral or political, by which mankind is assailed." To express myself in language suited to the ideas of the transatlantic philosopher, If from the circle of the virtues we subtract conju-



gal fidelity, we break the circle of social order and happiness.

Dr. Paley, speaking of the criminal intercourse between the sexes, observes, "That it is a fact," however it be accounted for, "that it corrupts and depraves the moral character more than any single species of vice whatsoever." He adds, "These indulgencies in low life are usually the first stages of men's progress to the most desperate villanies; and in high life, to that lamentable dissoluteness of principle, which manifests itself in a profligacy of public conduct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and moral probity."

That war not only sanctions, but powerfully promotes this criminal intercourse, will not be doubted by any one who has had access to fleets and camps: and if it is destructive to virtuous love and conjugal affection, if it forces asunder those whom God has joined together and for years keeps them separate,—we must regard it as a moral evil of the first magnitude. To expect the Christian virtues to flourish in a camp, a fleet, or in any situation deprived of the influence of virtuous female society, is an expectation as little likely to be realized as that fruits and flowers should arrive at perfection without the genial warmth and light of the sun.

It may safely be laid down as a general axiom, that whatever promotes individual virtue and happiness, will also promote public security and prosperity, or that whatever "is wise, just, and humane, will be found the true interest of states." I am sure you will cordially agree with me, that nothing so certain-

ly promotes individual happiness as virtuous love. Soldiers and sailors, from being thrown into the society of the most abandoned females, often lose not only the relish for virtuous love, but for virtue itself. Did the evil stop here, there would be the less cause for regret : but at the end of a war, thousands of women, as well as of men, who have been habituated to vice and profligacy, are cast into the private walks of society, and spread a destructive and extensive moral contagion. In this way, a passion which, under due discipline and regulation, is calculated to ennoble human nature, and fit man for happiness, both here and hereafter, is, by being turned aside into a polluted channel, converted into poison, and rendered a fruitful source of contamination, guilt, and misery.

The histories of all nations, ancient or modern, afford ample proofs of the universal influence and power of love ; and, whatever gloomy ascetics or bigoted priests may affirm, it is a principle which Omnipotence never meant to be subdued ; and it is one of the greatest excellencies of Christianity over every other religion, that it lays down a just and rational law for its regulation, and secures to females that affection, reverence, and honour, which the great and all-wise Creator seems to have assigned them. Condemning not only polygamy and divorce, but every thing leading to vice and immorality, Christianity holds marriage honourable.—Considering the power and stability of a nation to depend more on its moral character than on the numbers and physical strength of its population ; and regarding

the institution of marriage as the palladium of morality ; it will follow that war, if an enemy to this institution, must be an enemy to mankind ; and a moral evil, alike destructive to happiness and security.

Deficient as Britons, and particularly those engaged in war, may be in this very important point of moral character, it is some consolation to reflect, that in proportion as they are in this respect less guilty than most other people, so do they enjoy superior blessings and privileges. By those who have had ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the moral and domestic characters of the nations in the south of Europe, who have suffered so intensely from war, and who have yet hardly tasted the sweets of peace, we are informed that the marriage institution is little better than an empty name ; and this even in the highest classes of society. Regarding maternal instruction as the foundation-stone of education, may we not infer that the immoral conduct of mothers, in their disregard of the marriage vows, has been one principal cause of the misery and moral degradation of these nations.

If, from the Christian nations in the south of Europe, we turn our view to those countries where Mohammedanism, and, with it, polygamy prevail, we shall find still stronger evidence of the correctness of the above remark. In savage nations, where the females are regarded as domestic slaves, and in Mohammedan countries where their situation, though frequently splendid, is equally calculated to destroy virtuous love and generous principles, the men are, for the most part, deceitful, depraved, and cruel.



Of this, Turkey appears at this moment to afford a very melancholy proof: and may we not attribute this mainly to the defects of early education; for, in the degraded state of females, whether among Mohammedans or savages, what can be looked for in the way of maternal instruction? We must expect that children of both sexes brought up under degraded mothers, will partake of the mother's character. I mention these things to show the evil effects arising from a departure from those laws which Christianity prescribes respecting marriage; and I leave you to decide whether war, as an enemy to conjugal duty and affection, does not produce evils similar to those which arise from polygamy or savage life.

British females stand upon high ground; and of them (as much is given) much will be required. Almost incredible as it may appear, I have known some among them, who though they could not endure the sight of an animal or an insect in pain, would read of the slaughter of thousands of Frenchmen with their eyes glistening with joy. Surely, my dear sir, it is the duty of the clergy, as the ambassadors of the Prince of Peace, to unite their efforts to cast out this demon from the breasts of their fair country-women. Till females become the advocates of *peace on earth*, Britain, however extensive its benevolent institutions, will be intrinsically wanting in that charity without which the highest Christian attainments are as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

Though no longer a member of a profession, which has, during a large portion of my life, afforded me

in some degree support ; and which has constituted the pleasure, and, I may add, the pride of a considerable part of it ; I hope I may be permitted as a seaman, and as a seaman's friend, to say a few words concerning a practice, which seems to be not only at variance with policy and humanity, but peculiarly calculated to promote vice, by forcing asunder those whom God has joined together ;—I mean the practice of the impressment of seamen.

This custom, alike contrary to the laws of God and man, and productive of much vice and misery, will be considered in my next letter.

I remain, &c. &c.

## LETTER VI.

### THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

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“What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”—*Matt. xix. 6.*

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MY DEAR SIR,

**B**EFORE I enter upon the subject of impressment, permit me to say a few words on the characters and habits of seamen; for it is a subject on which, I believe, landsmen in general, have formed very erroneous opinions.

Seamen are commonly considered as persons of vicious, idle, and thoughtless habits. This may be very true of them after being long employed in the naval service; but their character is often the very reverse of this when they enter, or rather, when they are forced into it. Seamen, at least those who are regularly brought up as such, are early accustomed to habits of industry, and they quit them with regret. They are trained to a laborious trade, which, in common with other trades, holds out to them the cheering prospect, which most good men look forward to as essential to a high degree of earthly happiness,—which is that, by good conduct, they may, in due time, be enabled to marry those they love, or afford support to aged or infirm



parents. That men of these habits and views should, from a life of industry, be dragged into scenes of vice and debauchery, is deeply to be lamented. That they should be placed in situations likely to send them to their last account, "with all their sins upon their heads," is what you, as a clergyman, must particularly deplore. But vice and misery must ensue from every system which interferes with the sacred institution of marriage; an institution coeval with the creation, and with which the custom of impressment is in open hostility.

The eloquent advocate of the Negro slaves in the West Indies, in his *Appeal* in their behalf, after quoting the extract I have given, in my last letter, from Dr. Paley, adds:

"This cannot be surprising to any considerate mind. The supreme Ordainer of all things, in his moral administration of the universe, usually renders crime, in the way of natural consequences, productive of punishment; and it was surely to be expected that he would manifest, by some strong judicial sanction, his condemnation of practices, which are at war with the marriage institution, the great expedient for maintaining the moral order and social happiness of mankind."

At a meeting in 1825 of the Anti-slavery Society, an advertisement from a Jamaica paper was read, in which it was stated, that a female slave had absconded; that she was supposed to be harboured by her husband; and a reward was offered for her apprehension. This account called forth strong expressions of sympathy and indignation: but a little reflection would have shown to Dr. Lushington

or Mr. Wilberforce, that, whether we regard the cruelty of forcibly separating man and wife, or the crime of violating the marriage institution, impressment is more to be deprecated than Negro slavery; and the seaman is placed in a worse situation than the slave who is born in the colonies. The latter will seldom be separated more than a few miles from her he calls his wife; and the worst punishment that can await him, is flogging or imprisonment. But the seaman is not only forcibly separated from his wife and family, but he is sent into a distant part of the globe, and this not merely to work, but to transgress one of the first principles of human nature; to fight and kill those who have never injured him; and, strange to say, the British seaman engages in the work of destruction with zeal and alacrity, and without inquiry. If checked by conscience, or if urged by humanity, or the all-powerful feelings of conjugal or parental affection, he ventures to quit a situation into which he has been forced, he is *liable* to suffer DEATH!! We are told by the highest legal authority, that Christianity is "part and parcel of our code of laws." Impressment alas! seems to dismiss from this code, the distinguishing characteristics of Christianity, viz. justice, judgment, and mercy; and therefore the continuance of it must be as contrary to our interest as to our duty.

An author of the present day, equally to be admired for the elegance of his writings, and for the benevolent spirit these writings in general exhibit, has expressed apparent satisfaction for having *settled*

*the question* concerning the legality of impressment\*. If this practice can, indeed, be justified on the score of its legality, it would seem to me that no laws against *Catholics*, or others who dissent from the state religion, ought to be regarded as illegal. Impressment and these laws, stand upon the same basis, namely, expediency, or state necessity. They are alike as to their legality; and the Catholic who, like Mr. Butler, holds the lawfulness of impressment, ought to be the last man in the world to complain of Catholic disabilities. I beg leave, however, to assure the author of the *Reminiscences*, that I am as friendly to Catholic emancipation as himself, though, I apprehend, on very different grounds. These practices, and Negro slavery, alike violate the first principle of Christianity, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." I conclude, therefore, that neither of these can be lawful, if we consider Christianity as "part and parcel of our code of laws." The first principle of this religion is an inflexible obedience to its precepts: this neither Protestant nor Catholic can lay claim to; if they could, there would now be no contention between them, nor would there be any impressment into fleets or armies.

Although it is true that the evils arising from impressment are upon a small scale, compared to those of Negro slavery; yet, if we apply the test to war in general, we shall find its evils, whether on

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\* See Butler's *Reminiscences*, p. 70.



the score of cruelty or crime, infinitely more extensive. If, therefore, war were banished from the world, we might indulge a reasonable hope that slavery and minor evils would soon cease to exist, and that the happy time would be accelerated; when men "shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." Most cordially, however, do I wish success to those who have so nobly laboured to abolish slavery.

From the minds of the slaves becoming partially enlightened, the dangers of slavery have become so great, that the risk attending its continuance, or its abolition, appears to be about equal. It requires not the gift of prophecy to foresee that this must be the case with impressment, at no distant period, if again resorted to. Is it to be imagined, that a custom infinitely more galling and degrading than feudalism, will endure for ages after the feudal system has disappeared, and that it will stand the shock of civil and religious knowledge, which is rapidly spreading among all classes of mankind? Impressment was suited to the barbarous times in which it originated,—times, when the commanders of ships were about as ignorant as their crews now are. Is it to be expected, that, when knowledge breaks the fetters imposed by ignorance, seamen will fight for laws or legislators, that afford them no protection in return? The present system is one of imminent danger, and no lover of his country can look back to our naval history in 1797, without entertaining a conviction, that the safety of a nation depending upon an armed force, supplied by impressment, rests

upon a quicksand. In that year, the force which has, for ages, been considered as the foundation of our national safety and honour, was nearly, and at a very critical period, proving the cause of our downfall. This ought never to be lost sight of by the advocates of impressment; and I trust I am not inconsistent in considering its existence as a very great political, as well as moral evil. It has already caused seamen to expatriate themselves by thousands, and even to fight against the country that gave them birth. It renders them desperate and ferocious; and, as outcasts, deprived of hope and protection from any laws, they become fitted for piracy, or the worst of crimes.

In the same paper in which I read an account of the meeting of the Anti-slavery Society, (*Observer*, 2d May, 1825,) it was stated that a soldier was taken before the magistrate at the police-office, in Queen-square, for not allowing sufficient support to his wife. The presiding magistrate observed:

“It will not do—if three shillings and sixpence a week is to be allowed out of a soldier’s pay for the support of his wife, it will be the means of reducing the soldiers to beggary. My opinion is, that it is impossible for a soldier’s pay to maintain a family, and, therefore, *he ought not to be allowed to marry.*”

In the service of our country, even in time of peace, we have about one hundred thousand men, all in the prime and vigour of manhood, placed in this situation. A large portion of these may probably be considered as an organized body of men, *at war with the marriage institution.* I would here ask

the eloquent and benevolent advocate of the Negroes, who has never, I believe, taken a decided part against war, whether a nation keeping so many young men in a state of celibacy, or something worse, may not expect that "*God will manifest, by some strong judicial sanction, his condemnation of a practice which is at war with the marriage institution, the great expedient for maintaining the moral order and social happiness of mankind.*" Happy, my dear Sir, should I be, to see yourself and this eloquent advocate for the Negro slaves, and also the learned civilian, with the author of the *Reminiscences*, enrolled in the lists of the Peace Societies. But I fear this is a hope in which I must not indulge; as "there are not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," who are to be found in their ranks: and few indeed, of the clergy, in any European nation, aspire, as peace-makers, to the honour of being "called the children of GOD."

To enumerate only a small part of the evils originating in war, would fill a volume, instead of a letter. Among these, I will just notice its direct tendency to impede the reception of Christianity, among Jews, Mohammedans, Deists, and Pagans. A case much in point presents itself, in the following paper, which was affixed to the church-door at Falmouth, in September, 1820, prior to a sermon delivered there by a popular preacher, to promote the views of the Society for the conversion of the Jews.

"Our Messiah, when he comes, will establish a system of mercy, and peace, and kindness upon earth; while among you, Christians, nothing but disputes, animosities, and cruel-



ties, mark your passage through the world. Possibly, your religion sanctions these things : ours does not ; for, with us, the goodness and beneficence, alone, of the Mosaic laws, constitute their grand authority, and proclaim aloud their emanation from a good and beneficent God. We want no better, we expect no better, until Messiah shall indeed come. Then, (if the prophets of our sacred volume speak true,) the conduct of man towards his fellows will be the reverse of what it is now. ‘ Every man shall then sit under his vine, and under his fig-tree. Nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more : but the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the wolf and the lamb feed together, and a little child shall lead them.’ Has this happy period, this golden era of public peace and private love, ever yet been witnessed ? Speak candidly, Christian ! has it been once seen through the lapse of 1800 years \* ?

Your brother in the dust,

Tizri, 5823.

ZECHER LACHORCAN.”

The above paper was written, it is supposed, by a Jew, resident in the town of Falmouth. Who is the author of it, is, however, a question of trifling moment ; it is with the truth and justice of the remarks contained in it that we have to do ; and never can Christians prove to the Jews, that Jesus was the true Messiah, so long as they continue *to learn war*, which is “as contrary to the meekness and gentleness of the Christian religion, as cruelty to mercy, or tyranny to charity.” To be consistent, they must either relinquish the practice of war, or cease to as-

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\* I shall have occasion, in a subsequent letter, to show that, during the first two centuries, Christians steadily refused to bear arms, *under any circumstances*.— See Letters IX. and X.

sert that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, the Prince of Peace.

Similar objections, it would appear, are made by the Hindoos. Abbé Dubois says: "It is, I believe, generally admitted, that the invasions and conquests, which the Europeans, prompted by avarice and an inextinguishable thirst of dominion, have not ceased to make in the old and new world, during the last three or four centuries, have, in most cases, proved rather a curse than a blessing; and have, on the whole, produced more evil than good." The opinion of this veteran missionary is, that the Hindoos believe that the natives of Europe have no religion; and they have, it is certain, some grounds for coming to this conclusion. Europeans distribute among them a book containing the principles of a religion, which preaches "peace on earth;" but from experience, they find that the natives of Europe are far more addicted than themselves, to fighting, rapine, plunder, and every thing that is forbidden in this book: and, as Europeans hold in equal contempt the Hindoo Shaster, Hindoos naturally conclude that they have no religion at all. I might enlarge much on this subject; but I trust that I have said enough to show that war is a fruitful source of vice and misery; that it promotes infidelity, and renders the spread of Christianity in Pagan countries, where we have engaged in it, next to impossible.

It is therefore plainly the duty of every professor of Christianity, whether minister or layman, Protestant or Catholic, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, Arminian or Calvinist, Trinitarian or Unitarian, publicly

to declare, that the religion he professes does not permit its professors to engage in war ; for he cannot, in any other way, answer the arguments brought against his religion by Jews, Mohammedans, and Deists. Though he may show that Christianity is superior in moral excellency to every other religion ; though he may show that his own peculiar views of it are the very best ;—he cannot, with consistency, say that it is the religion of which it was predicted by the prophet Isaiah, (xxxii. 17.) that “the work of righteousness shall be peace ; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.”

Before I conclude this subject, permit me to show you that my opinions respecting the evils of war, so far from being singular, are in unison with the sentiments of some highly respectable writers.

LORD CLARENDON says: “War introduces and propagates opinions and practices, as much against heaven as against earth ; and it lays our natures, and our manners, as waste as our gardens and habitations ; and we can as easily preserve the beauty of the one, as the integrity of the other, under the cursed jurisdiction of drums and trumpets.”

ARCHBISHOP SECKER says: “War not only weakens and afflicts a community, but interrupts the freedom of commerce ; retards the propagation of knowledge ; prevents useful employments ; takes the public attention from domestic concerns ; furnishes occasions for abuses ; obstructs the remedy of inconveniences, till they grow inveterate and hard to cure : in short, disorders and unhinges the whole system



of civil affairs. Every suffering thus caused, is a heinous crime, and every death a murder."

BISHOP PORTEUS, (though in advanced life a defender of the lawfulness of the military profession,) in his beautiful poem on Death, written when at College, says :

" . . . . . One murder made a villain,  
Millions a hero.—Princes were privileged  
To kill, and numbers sanctified the crime.  
Ah, why will kings forget that they are men?  
And men that they are brethren? Why delight  
In human sacrifice? Why burst the ties  
Of nature, that should knit their souls together  
In one soft bond of amity and love?  
Yet still they breathe destruction, still go on,  
Inhumanly ingenious to find out  
New pains for life, new terrors for the grave,  
Artificers of death! Still monarchs dream  
Of universal empire growing up  
From universal ruin.—Blast the design,  
Great God of hosts; nor let thy creatures fall,  
Unpitied victims at ambition's shrine!"

As I shall hereafter have occasion to quote Bishop Porteus as the defender of military heroes\*, I shall not now trouble you with any comments on the extract I have made from one of his *early* productions.

I cannot take my leave of you, for the present, without noticing a remark of yours, which, as it regards the moral evils occasioned by war, seems to be at variance with the sentiments expressed in this letter, and to contradict the opinions of those great and good men I have just quoted. You ask "How it happens that the moral and religious character of

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\* See Letter VII.

our nation has so greatly improved during the last century, a large part of which we have been engaged in war,—if a state of warfare is so very destructive of religion and morality?”

Allowing, for the sake of argument, that your statement is true,—may we not consider this as an exception to a rule nearly general; and may we not attribute the alleged improvement in our national character, to causes which would have operated with much greater effect, had we remained at peace? During the present century, the progress of education and general knowledge has been greater than at any preceding period; and unexampled efforts have been made by Bible, and Missionary, and various other societies and institutions, religious, moral, and charitable, which have exercised a powerful influence over our national character; an influence that even war has not been able to overcome, though it may have greatly impeded its progress: it may perhaps be said that, through the influence of these institutions, we have advanced in piety and morality, in spite of the demoralizing effects of war. But the most rapid improvement that has ever been experienced by our nation, has been since the establishment of peace. Should this blessing be continued to us for twenty years to come,—religion, morals, and science, progressively improving,—we may hope that the minds of our countrymen, and of our countrywomen too, will become so generally enlightened and christianized, that it will be very difficult for any minister to drag the country into another war. Should you observe that this is directly

opposed by experience and precedent, I answer, that the increase of knowledge has also been without precedent.

The baneful effects of war have been greatly lessened by our insular situation, and our country not being the actual seat of war during several generations. From our wars being carried on abroad, our navy and army, except at our naval ports and garrison towns, have had little intercourse with the mass of our population at home; indeed, from removing idle and vicious persons out of the country, wars may have rendered its population more pure; as a large portion of these persons have never returned to their native shores. But, surely it must be a painful reflection to you, and to every pious minister of the Gospel, that these men have been removed to situations where their moral regeneration was little likely to be effected; and where the probability is, that they became more depraved, and died in their sins. What pains do we take to prepare malefactors for their final account; but with what indifference are thousands dispatched by war into the presence of God, with all their sins upon their heads!

I have hitherto taken it for granted that our national character has really been improved in the way you have stated: but this may admit of some doubt; at least, as to the extent of this assumed improvement. Allowing our stock of national morals to have increased, do you think our national depravity has been lessened? Perhaps no period of our history will exhibit more crime and litigation: and, if we



have of late years expended large sums of money for building churches, we have done the same for building prisons. It must be admitted that we live in an age when preaching, and praying, and talking about the *doctrines* of religion are much in fashion ; but whether the religion inculcated in our Lord's sermon on the mount, or vital religion, is more abundant now than it was fifty years ago, requires to be proved. It is certain that those who are commonly called *honourable men*, are, in their worldly transactions, generally found to be as just, and as much to be depended upon, as those who are called *serious* Christians, and held up as patterns of piety and virtue. In the increase of our religious and charitable institutions, I rejoice with you ; but, independent of fashion and other local causes, may not this increase be attributed, in no small degree, to the great addition of our national wealth. If Britons, with increased means, do not expend more money than their forefathers did, in acts of charity, it will follow that they have become more parsimonious, instead of being more beneficent than former generations.

As an admirer of Mr. Malthus, it is possible you may object to some parts of my present letter, as likely to interfere with his *principle of population*. I perfectly agree with that gentleman, that men ought not to marry without a prospect of being able to support a family : but I think it difficult to reconcile some of the views of Mr. Malthus with the beneficence of God, and the benign spirit of the Gospel. If during the last war we expended as

much money as would have clothed and fed all the paupers in Europe ; if we employed a large portion of our population in human destruction, instead of cultivating the soil,—shall we impiously complain of our over-population? But, perhaps, it did not accord with the plans of Mr. Malthus to notice the evils inflicted upon the world by ambitious rulers.

It has been said that he wrote the “Essay on Population” purposely to bring into discredit the writings of Mr. Godwin, and those who, with him, have been denominated *modern philosophers*. If this is the case, it would seem probable that he has only taken a limited and partial view of the question ; such a view, indeed, as fell in with his own plans in writing the Essay. As a believer in Christianity, and in the cheering prophecies concerning it, Mr. Malthus could not be ignorant, notwithstanding his principle of population, and all his gloomy anticipations founded upon it, that, instead of misery and starvation being intended by the beneficent Ruler of the world, a period of peace and plenty and of religious knowledge is advancing. I mention these things, to introduce a remark which, I think, you will not consider as irrelevant in this place.

We are informed by history, that previous to our Saviour’s advent, a very general expectation prevailed, both among Jews and Gentiles, that some great change in the world was about to take place. An expectation, somewhat similar, appears to prevail at the present time, and to be cherished, not only by believers in Christianity, but by those who

reject it. What is the precise difference between that happy state which Christianity *certainly* will produce, and the *perfectability* which *modern philosophers* anticipate, I leave you to decide, who may have paid more attention to the subject than I have done. Of this I entertain no doubt, that "men will beat their swords into ploughshares;" that they "will cease to learn war;" that "the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea;" and that, literally or figuratively, "every man shall sit under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." Anticipations, whether in the writings of Christians or of modern philosophers, which accord with these prophecies, *must be* realized, whatever may be the cause, for "the MOUTH OF THE LORD OF HOSTS HATH SPOKEN IT\*;" and "*his word*," we are assured, "*shall not return unto him void*†." I hail, therefore, with some degree of pleasure, the anticipations of writers like Mr. Godwin and Mr. Owen, inasmuch as they sanction the presumption that the minds of men are gradually fitting for the happiness destined for them in the immutable counsels of Omnipotence. "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." But I am entering upon a subject, which will more properly be introduced in a future letter.

When we contemplate the benevolent purposes of Omnipotence towards a guilty world, exhibited in the prophecies, and particularly in the Christian

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\* Micah iv. 4:

† Isai. lv. 11.



revelation, what powerful incentives do we find for ministers of the Gospel to preach "peace on earth!"—"How beautiful," says the prophet\*, "upon the mountains, are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace!" But still more delightful and persuasive are these prophecies, when connected with the words of our Saviour: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God†." If I could produce any stronger persuasions to induce you, and Mr. Malthus, and the clergy of the Established Church, to join heart and hand with the *Peace Societies* that God is raising up in various parts of the world, to fulfil his benevolent purposes, I would urge them. Of this, nevertheless, you may be assured, that these purposes will be fulfilled, whether you, as the appointed husbandmen, labour in the vineyard, or not.

It is, however, with some satisfaction, I congratulate you, and the clergy of the present day, that though you do not prominently stand forward in the Gospel cause of "peace on earth;" yet that you do not, as in the days of Erasmus, generally sound the trumpet of war. After observing, that among the Romans, whoever entered on the office of Pontifex Maximus, or High Priest, was obliged to swear that he would keep his hands unstained with blood; and that, if he were provoked, or even hurt by any aggressor, he would not avenge the injury; Erasmus adds:

"But among Christians, as if shame had fled from the

\* Isai. lii. 7.

† Matt. v. 9.

earth, clergymen, solemnly consecrated to God, are often among the first to inflame the minds, both of king and people, to blood and devastation. They convert the sweet accents of the Gospel into the trumpet of Mars; and, forgetting the dignity of their profession, run about making proselytes to their opinion, ready to do or suffer any thing, so long as they can but succeed in kindling the flames of war. Kings, who perhaps might otherwise have kept quiet, are set on fire by those very men, who ought, if they acted in character, to cool the ardour of warring potentates by their official and sacred authority."

"A very few years ago, when the world, labouring under a deadly fever, was running headlong to arms, the Gospel trumpeters blew a blast from the pulpit, and inflamed the wretched kings of Europe to a paroxysm, running as they were fast enough of themselves into a state of downright insanity. Among the English, the clergy fulminated from the pulpit against the French; and among the French, against the English. They all united in instigating to war. Not one man among the clergy exhorted to peace, or at least, not above one or two, whose lives would perhaps be in danger, if I were even now to name them.

"The right reverend fathers in God, the bishops, forgetting their personal dignity, were continually running to and fro', like the Evil One, adding virulence to the public disease of the world, by their mischievous officiousness; instigating, on one hand, Julius the Pope, and, on the other, the surrounding kings, to push on the war with vigour, as if both pope and kings were not mad enough without their inflammatory suggestions. In the meantime, the fathers in God failed not to call their blood-thirsty rage, a zeal for law, order, and religion. To forward their sanguinary purposes, they wrest the laws of Heaven to a constructive meaning they never meant, they misinterpret the writings of good men, they misquote and misrepresent Scripture, I do not say with the most barefaced impudence only, but the most blasphemous

mous impiety. Nay, matters are come to such a pass, that it is deemed foolish and wicked to open one's mouth against war, or to venture a syllable in praise of peace ; the constant theme of Christ's eulogy. He is thought to be ill affected to the king, and even to pay but little regard to the people's interest, who recommends what is of all things in the world the most salutary, to both king and people, or dissuades from that which, without any exception, is the most destructive." See *Complaint of Peace*, pages 42, 43.

To what extent the present days are better than the past, as regards the exertions of the clergy, whether Protestant or Catholic, it is not for me to decide. But it may, without fear of contradiction, be said that, in preaching this prominent doctrine of the Gospel, "Peace on earth," they are not "instant in season and out of season ;" and it is most clear that this duty is inseparably connected with rendering "glory to God in the highest."

When I began these letters, I was in hopes of comprising all my title-page promises, in as small a space as I have already occupied with only a part of my subject matter. My work has increased insensibly under my pen, and the importance of my subject must be my apology for the length of my letters : it must also be my apology, if these letters contain any matter calculated to hurt the feelings of yourself, or of any one.

I remain, &c.





## LETTER VII.

### ARGUMENTS GENERALLY URGED IN FAVOUR OF WAR, WITH ANSWERS TO THEM.

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“Woe unto you that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.”—*Isaiah* v. 23.

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MY DEAR SIR,

**I**F the statements made in the letters which I have had the honour to address to you and the public, concerning the causes and evils of war, are true,—or if they are only in part so,—it might be expected that war, and those who take part in it, would have few defenders, at least among the virtuous, the humane, and the enlightened part of mankind. I regret to say that this is not the case; and that among the defenders of war, may be numbered such men as Dr. Paley and Bishop Porteus, whose humanity can be as little doubted as their learning and integrity.

If men like these, through error or prejudice, happen to call evil good, and good evil, the mischief to society may be incalculable: the former, in particular, has acquired that high character for sagacity and integrity, that many accede to his decisions with almost implicit obedience. It is, perhaps, to

this ready and blind acquiescence in the opinions of others, more than to any other single cause, that war and its evils, instead of being eradicated or lessened by the Gospel of Peace and the exercise of our reasoning faculties, have been suffered to increase and take deep root.—The following remarks from the pen of a trans-atlantic writer, describing the way in which we receive and adopt our opinions and prejudices, appear to be so just and proper, that I need no apology for transcribing them.

“Of the speculative notions, and the rules of conduct, which are common among men, a large portion were imbibed, they know not how; and are persisted in, they hardly know why. These, whether right or wrong, attach themselves firmly to the mind. They serve for support in theory, and for excuse in practice. They are rarely doubted, as they are seldom subjected to enquiry. Opinions long indulged, fortified by association and endeared by habit, are not abandoned without reluctance, even when demonstrated to be false, and felt to be dangerous. Such opinions are the props by which the mind sustains itself against the concussions of doubt and the fluctuations of uncertainty. We shrink from the thought of renouncing them, more than from the assurance of their falsity; and as the mind delights in ease, it may often be more readily pacified with what is wrong, if it be familiar, than roused to the examination, and impelled to the adoption, of truth\*.”

On the principles laid down by this pacific writer, we may, I think, satisfactorily account for men of

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\* “Thoughts on the practical advantages of those who hold the doctrine of peace over those who vindicate war.”—Printed at New York, 1817.



learning and integrity standing forth as the apologists or defenders of war and warriors. I shall therefore proceed to the examination of the opinions of these two writers, with the seriousness and caution the subject deserves.

As some may peruse these pages who have not the Lectures of Bishop Porteus to refer to, I transcribe the following extract from his eighth lecture. Speaking of the centurion whose son Christ had healed, he says :

“This is an unanswerable proof, that whenever men abandon themselves to impiety, infidelity, and profligacy, the fault is not in the situation, but in the heart; and that there is no mode of life, no employment or profession, which may not, if we please, be made consistent with a sincere belief in the Gospel, and with the practice of every duty we owe to our Maker, our Redeemer, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves.

“Nor is this the only instance in point; for it is extremely remarkable, and well worthy our attention, that among all the various characters we meet with in the New Testament, there are few represented in a more amiable light, or spoken of in stronger terms of approbation, than those of certain military men. Besides the centurion who is the subject of this lecture, it was a centurion who at our Saviour’s crucifixion gave the voluntary, honest, and unprejudiced testimony in his favour, ‘*Truly this was the Son of God*\*.’ It was a centurion who voluntarily preserved the life of St. Paul, when a proposition was made to destroy him, after his shipwreck on the island of Melita†. It was a centurion to whom St. Peter was sent by the express appoint-

\* Matt. xxvii. 54.

† Acts xxvii. 43.

ment of God, to make him the first convert among the Gentiles: a distinction, of which he seemed in every respect worthy; being, as we are told, ‘a just and a devout man; one that feared God with all his house; that gave much alms, and prayed to God alway\*.’”

“We see, then, that our centurion was not the only military man celebrated in the Gospel for his piety and virtue; nor are there wanting, thank God, distinguishing instances of the same kind in our own age, in our own nation, among our own commanders, and in the recent memory of every one here present. All which examples tend to confirm the observations already made, of the perfect consistency of a military, and every other mode of life, with a firm belief in the doctrines, and a conscientious obedience to the precepts of religion.

“Thirdly, there is still another reflection arising from this circumstance, with which I shall conclude the present lecture; and this is, that when we observe men bred up in arms repeatedly spoken of in Scripture in such strong terms of commendation as those we have mentioned, we are authorized to conclude, that the profession they are engaged in is not, as a mistaken sect of Christians amongst us professes to think, an unlawful one. On the contrary, it seems to be studiously placed by the sacred writers in a favourable and honourable light; and in this light it always has been, and always ought to be, considered. He who undertakes an occupation of great toil and great danger, for the purpose of serving, defending, and protecting his country, is a most valuable and respectable member of society; and if he conducts himself with valour, fidelity, and humanity, and amidst the horrors of war cultivates the gentle manners of peace, and the virtues of a devout and holy life, he most amply deserves, and will assuredly receive the

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\* Acts x. 2.

esteem, the admiration, and the applause of his grateful country, and what is of still greater importance, the approbation of his God\*."

As the most popular arguments in favour of war are here marshalled in order, and placed in an imposing point of view; and as they are in accordance with the views of yourself and the major part of Christians, I trust that I need not apologize either for the extent of the foregoing extract, or for my answering the arguments it contains at some length. I am aware that the answers I am about to offer, have already, in substance, been urged, not only by writers of respectability since the Reformation, but also by some of the best writers in the early ages of Christianity. The excuse I have for repeating them here is, that writings on this subject have been little read, and less attended to.

From what is related concerning the centurion, first referred to, (Matt. viii.) we may conclude that he was firmly impressed with a belief in the supernatural powers possessed by our Saviour. This conviction, belief, or faith, (call it by what name you please,) appears to be what is so justly praised

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\* By way of contrast to these opinions, I beg to state those of a man of great knowledge and experience in life, Sir Walter Raleigh. When on the scaffold, he thus addressed the spectators: "And now I entreat you all to join with me in prayer, that the great God of heaven, whom I have grievously offended, being a man full of vanity, and have lived a sinful life in all sinful callings, having been a soldier, a captain, a sea captain, and a courtier; which are all places of wickedness and vice;—that God, I say, would forgive me, and cast away my sins from me, and that he would receive me into everlasting life."



by our Lord, when he says, 'I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.' It is not, however, to be imagined that a Roman soldier could have any definite ideas concerning the Messiahship of Jesus, or those points of faith which Christians deem of so much importance. That this centurion was a man of a modest and humble frame of mind, and so far like a Christian, is highly probable from his demeanour towards our Saviour; and that he was also a man of general benevolence, we may conclude from his liberal conduct towards the Jews, at that time a despised and a degraded people. But neither these things collectively, nor any other particular related of him, prove him to have been a Christian; and it is certain he might be every thing here represented, and yet remain a pagan, and by no means superior to many pagans whose histories are handed down to us. As idolatrous services were required of all Roman soldiers, I am unavoidably led to the conclusion, either that this centurion remained merely a virtuous pagan, or else, upon embracing Christianity, that he, like other Romans similarly circumstanced, quitted the military profession; for it must be borne in mind, that he could not remain in the Roman army without performing idolatrous acts; and consequently, he could not, if a soldier, be a real Christian.

As to the expression of the centurion at the crucifixion, "Truly this was the Son of God," it only proves that he was compelled by the awful scene he witnessed, to acknowledge that Jesus was more than a common man. (Compare Matt. xxvii. 54,

with Luke xxiii. 47.) Dr. Porteus, in his zeal, has here gone too far. The text says, "Now when the centurion, *and they that were with him,*" &c. If therefore any praise is due to the centurion for this saying, the same praise is due to those *that were with him*, viz. the murderers of our Saviour. As to the conduct of the other centurion towards St. Paul, related Acts xxiii. 43, it only shows, what every person of candour must readily admit, that a pagan soldier may be, what Christian soldiers frequently are not, humane and benevolent.

The case of the last centurion, mentioned in Acts x. 2, though more to the point, affords no satisfactory evidence to decide the question. This pious man, it seems probable, became a sincere Christian. One fact, however, and that a very important one, we are altogether ignorant of, viz. whether this centurion quitted the military profession on becoming a Christian. The advocates for this profession, in which number is Dr. Paley, suppose that he remained a soldier, because the narrative gives no account of his quitting the situation he then held. This is mere conjecture, unattended by proof; and surely it seems more probable, for the reason already\* stated, viz. the idolatrous services required of the Roman soldiers, as well as from the practices of the Christians in the first two centuries, that this centurion relinquished the profession of arms, or else, that he, like Naaman, worshiped occasionally

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\* See also Letter X.

in the heathen temple, or that he altogether relapsed into paganism.

Dr. Porteus, in all that he has said, does not appear to have advanced one solid argument to justify the unauthorized conclusion he has drawn. And, after giving to his remarks the serious consideration they deserve, what he has said, though imposing, amounts to very little. He pronounces, with a degree of gravity that would lead us to suspect either his judgement or his sincerity, that "He who undertakes an occupation of great toil and danger, for the purpose of serving, defending, and protecting his country, is a most valuable and respectable member of society; and if he conducts himself with valour, fidelity, and humanity, and amidst the horrors of war cultivates the gentle manners of peace, and the virtues of a devout life, he most amply deserves, and will assuredly receive, the esteem, the admiration, and the applause of his grateful country, and, what is of still greater importance, the approbation of his God."

These remarks are so very singular and surprising, that I cannot pass them over in silence. The first of them, though not so intended, does in reality convey a severe and sarcastic censure upon military men; for where do we meet with those who deserve the character here drawn? Instead of entering the navy or army, "for the purpose of serving, defending, and protecting their country," military men, in general, enter into them with the same selfish views and motives that men enter upon any other



profession or trade. Of officers it may, in general, be said, that they are as desirous as other men to acquire wealth, but that a wish to obtain rank and honour generally predominates ; they look forward to a *golden chain, or a wooden leg ; a peerage, or a monument in Westminster Abbey*. How men, who are hired for so much a-day, to do the utmost violence to the persons and property of their fellow-men, can, in the faithful discharge of their duty, “cultivate the gentle manners of peace,” is an enigma that the Gospel of Peace cannot solve. Men placed in this situation may “conduct themselves with valour ;” they may refrain from the use of the scalping-knife, and the brutal violence of past ages ; after inflicting injuries and wounds, they may treat the wounded, the sick, and the prisoner with humanity ;—but how are they to “visit the fatherless and widows, in their affliction” ? Their trade is to make widows, and to render children fatherless. How, in the exercise of such a trade, men can “cultivate the gentle manners of peace, and the virtues of a devout life,” it is not easy to conceive. At one period of his life, this venerable prelate appeared to think very differently ; at college, he said,

“ . . . . . One murder made a villain,  
Millions a hero.—Princes were privileged  
To kill, and numbers sanctified the crime.”

It is painful to say any thing conveying the slightest censure on this amiable and well-meaning prelate : but I wish, by stating facts, to warn my readers against forming their opinions on the important subject of war, on the authority of falli-

ble men, however distinguished by learning, and talent, and integrity ; for all uninspired men are liable to put "darkness for light, and light for darkness." Whilst we have the precepts of Jesus ; whilst we have the writings of the inspired apostles for our guides, and are possessed of common sense,—what insanity are we guilty of, to desert these, and suffer fallible men to conduct us from a *highway*, into interminable mazes and labyrinths ; to lead us from the paths of the Gospel of Peace, into the paths of endless war and bloodshed !

Permit me, before I take leave of the opinions of bishop Porteus, by way of commentary on these opinions, to contrast them with those of Erasmus. The latter says :

"If you detest robbery and pillage, remember these are among the duties of war ; and that, to learn how to commit them adroitly, is a part of military discipline. Do you shudder at the idea of murder ? You cannot require to be told, that to commit it with dispatch, and by wholesale, constitutes the celebrated art of war. If murder were not learned by this art, how could a man, who should shudder to kill one individual, even when provoked, go, in cold blood, and cut the throats of many for a little paltry pay, and under no better authority than a commission from a mortal as weak, wicked, and wretched as himself, who does not perhaps know even his person, and would not care if both his body and soul were annihilated ? If there cannot be a greater misfortune to the commonwealth, than a general neglect and disobedience of the laws, let it be considered as a certain truth, that the voice of law, divine or human, is never heard amid the clangor of arms and the din of battle. If you deem debauchery, rapes, incest, and crimes of still greater turpitude than these, foul disgraces to human nature,—depend

upon it that war leads to all of them, in their most aggravated atrocity. If impiety, or a total neglect of religion, is the source of all villany, be assured that religion is always overwhelmed in the storms of war." *Complaint of Peace*, page 64, 65.

Leaving you to decide for yourself this most important question, I proceed to examine the opinions of Dr. Paley, concerning war and the military profession. For an unlearned man, like myself, to attack opinions sanctioned by this giant in theology, in moral philosophy, and in learning, is, I feel, a bold undertaking. But the question is for Peace or War; and intending to confine myself to "the words of truth and soberness," and urged by an imperious sense of duty, I shall not shrink from the contest.

Regarding the subject as one involving the best interests of mankind, I shall reserve it for the beginning of my next letter.

I remain, &c. &c.



## LETTER VIII.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

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“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.”——“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.”——“Woe unto them which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the LORD of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel: therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand, and smitten them.”—*Isaiah* v. 20—25.

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My DEAR SIR,

WHETHER we survey “the heavens above, or the earth beneath,” we have just cause to exclaim, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches!”

If we contemplate the divine government, or the moral laws of God, our gratitude and our adoration ought to be equally excited towards Him, who has made the ways of wisdom the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *to be* peace. In these it may justly be said that “Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” To maintain that war forms a necessary link in the system of the divine government, is little short of affirming, that under this government vio-

lence and falsehood have met together; and impiety and robbery have kissed each other. Such an opinion appears to derogate from the mercy and goodness of a beneficent Creator, and to make him, instead of his creatures, the author of the crimes and moral evils that inundate the earth. The prophet Isaiah, it is very evident, entertained views on the subject of war, very different from those now generally received. Instead of war being an essential part of that system which God has established, it is mentioned by the holy prophet as emanating, altogether, from the disobedience of men: instead of happening in the usual course of his Providence, like earthquakes and storms, wars arise, because men "have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel: therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people."

Before I proceed to the main subject of this letter, permit me to ask you the cause of the distress which at this moment pervades our country. Many proximate and ostensible causes may be alleged; but I would ask you, whether you do not consider war as the real, though remote cause;—as the cause of all those minor causes, from whence poverty and all its concomitant evils proceed? It is, my dear Sir, "Because men have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel: therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand, and smitten them." The enriching a few and impoverishing the many, are the natural

consequences of war; and so is an uncertain and fluctuating state of commerce. And as to the evil arising from an over-issue of fictitious money\*, a highly talented and once popular minister taught men the use of it for the most ruinous of all purposes,—war. Individuals have adopted his practice, and it has been the ruin of thousands. Whether we, as a nation, may for a time escape its effects, is not for me to decide; but of this we are sure, that “they who take the sword, shall perish with the sword.” This is the remark of our Lord, and history attests its general correctness.

The greatest moral blessing, the great cure for all moral evils, and for which we can never be sufficiently thankful to the great Author of all our blessings, is the “Gospel of Peace.” It contains sure and certain rules for escaping this “anger of the Lord.” To enhance the boon, and excite us to exertion in the service of the *Prince of Peace*, God has graciously condescended to inform us, by men divinely inspired, of the certain and final triumph of the religion of Christ; that it will “cover the earth as the waters cover the sea;” that under its influence men will cease to value military honours, and beat their swords into ploughshares; that they will then dwell in perfect security, and men of ferocious habits will become humane and humble; that then “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid.” Ought we not,

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\* This was written at the time of the great commercial distress in 1826.



therefore, my dear Sir, to regard the goodness and condescension of the Great Ruler of the universe, in giving us a foreknowledge of this glorious triumph of truth over error; of Christianity over paganism;—ought we not, if we believe the promises of God, and are susceptible of gratitude, to endeavour to establish and extend the reign of the “Prince of Peace” to the uttermost parts of the earth?

Knowing how much the prejudices of the world are against me, I have thought it necessary to offer these prefatory remarks, before I enter upon the examination of the opinions of Dr. Paley on the subject of war, or rather of the military profession. Admiring, as I do, his transcendent talents; and conscious, also, of my own great inferiority, I cannot attempt to controvert any thing he has advanced, but with reluctance and diffidence. His opinions and his writings are held in such high estimation by some, that an attempt to controvert any of them is likely to be regarded by his admirers, (a very numerous class,) as a covert attack upon the Christian religion. Could I imagine that the stability of this religion depended upon the writings of Dr. Paley, I should certainly pause before I publicly question their soundness; but I am thankful in believing that Christianity, without his aid, is founded upon a rock. It is because I think that Dr. Paley has, unintentionally, inflicted a severe wound upon the religion which he has so ably defended, that I wish to show the unsoundness of his opinions respecting the lawfulness of war.

To maintain that Christianity permits its votaries,

with innocence, to engage in war, appears to weaken, if not to destroy, the evidences of its truth, and likely to entail on the world endless desolation and misery. If, indeed, Christianity sanctions war; nay, if it does not virtually prohibit it, it is quite an absurdity to expect that it should ever eradicate it from the world. It is an absurdity similar to the expecting a stupendous effect to be produced without an adequate cause. It is, indeed, to expect that the Gospel will annihilate the very thing that it is said to sanction.

As Dr. Paley speaks of the conduct of the different Roman centurions, in nearly the same terms that Bishop Porteus and others have done; and as he uses nearly the same arguments, or rather rhetoric, to show the lawfulness of the military profession,—I shall not notice what the venerable arch-deacon has said respecting these centurions, but confine myself to the general arguments brought forward by Dr. Paley and other writers, in favour of the military profession.

Among these, the argument founded on the admonition of John the Baptist to the soldiers, holds a prominent rank; but, as I shall have occasion to notice it hereafter, I shall, for the present, dismiss it\*.

One of the most popular pleas in favour of war, or rather, in favour of the military profession, with the exception of those already adduced, is from

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\* See the postscript to this Letter, addressed to the Editor of the Monthly Magazine, New Series.

Luke xxii. 36. "Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." These words of our Lord, at first sight, appear to give a sanction to the use of swords, otherwise it seems difficult to account for the advice given to the apostles to sell their garments, and purchase them. But from our Lord's remark, in the 38th verse, that *two swords were enough*, we may infer, that he did not mean his advice to be literally taken, for two swords were a very inadequate supply for twelve men. As a plain proof that the followers of Jesus are not, in any case, sanctioned to use the sword, he says to Peter in this same discourse, (as related by Matthew, chap. xxvi. 52.) "Put up thy sword; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." As a further proof, our Lord, when brought before Pilate, informs him that his kingdom is of a spiritual nature, and assigns this as a reason why his servants were not to fight: "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." From the latter part of the sentence, and preventing Peter from using the sword, even to save the life of his beloved Lord and Master, it may safely be inferred that we are not permitted, in any case, to use the sword in opposing magisterial power. Different expositions of this command of our Saviour have been advanced; but surely no exposition of a casual expression like this ought to be literally interpreted, when it runs counter to the uniform pacific precepts of



the Gospel, and is at the same time in contradiction to the practice of the early Christians; and more especially when such an exposition is opposed to the plain meaning of those prophecies of the Old Testament which relate to the Messiah's kingdom. One thing is very important, and which alone ought to induce us not to interpret this command literally; which is, that the apostles, to whom it was directly addressed, did never, as far as we know, pay obedience to it. If, my dear Sir, you, as a clergyman of the Church of England, and claiming a lineal descent from the apostles, contend for a literal interpretation of this command, you ought, if you wish to be consistent, to wear a sword; you ought "to sell your cloak, and buy one." Allowing however, for the sake of argument, that our Lord permitted his followers to provide swords for the purpose of self-defence in the perils to which they were about to be exposed, this can give no sanction to Christian nations to engage in war, and certainly none to individual Christians to make it a trade to live by.

Another argument, though certainly a less cogent one than the preceding, is drawn by some of the advocates for war, from the remark of our Lord, Matt. x. 34, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." The reasons already advanced, forbid us to suppose that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, here gives a sanction to his followers to use the sword. All that we ought to infer from these words, allowing them to be of general application to Christians of all pe-

riods and of all nations, is, that the religion of Christ would, in aftertimes, be perverted and abused; and by its perversion and abuse, not by its legitimate use, would, instead of producing peace and philanthropy among its votaries, “set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother,” &c. There is another explanation of this prophecy which I have somewhere met with, which ought, perhaps, to be preferred. If, instead of applying it generally, we confine it to the Jewish nation, (to whom it was addressed,) and to the land of Judea, all difficulty in understanding its real meaning will be removed. The expression here used, ἐπὶ τῇ γῇ, or, *on earth*, is of frequent recurrence in the New Testament. It sometimes means the terraqueous globe, or the whole earth, as in Luke x. 21. and Matt. v. 35. Sometimes it means merely the ground or the soil, as in Matt. xiii. 8. And sometimes it is applied to point out a particular country or district, as in Matt. ii. 21. If we take the expression in this latter sense, and apply it to the land of Judea, how awfully do we find this prophecy fulfilled in the history of the Jews!

Having heard it asserted, by ministers of the established church, that the religion of Christ has nothing to do with the putting down *national* wars, and establishing universal peace; and having heard this text brought forward as a proof, I beg to offer a few remarks thereon, considering such assertions as the above to be derogatory to the character of our Saviour and his religion. Our Lord was allowed even by his enemies to be a man of great saga-

city—to be a man who “spake as never man spake.” His readiness of mind, his quickness and acuteness in answering captious and ensnaring questions are apparent on different occasions\*. It was impossible, therefore, that he could say any thing to degrade or vilify the character of the religion he taught. He might, and he did tell his followers that the profession of his religion would expose them to dreadful hardships and cruelties; that it was not “to *give* peace, but a sword;”—but it was impossible that he who came to fulfil the law and the prophets should (in contradiction to these, to which he constantly appealed as tests of the truth of his mission,) tell his enemies that his was not that religion which was to establish “peace on earth.” The whole tenour of the Gospel and of prophecy consoles us with the assurance that “all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ,” and that the Gospel is, indeed, the *Gospel of Peace*. Those who maintain the contrary appear to libel that Gospel, which has suffered more from its injudicious friends than from its open and avowed enemies.

One of the principal arguments deduced from Scripture,—indeed, one on which great stress is laid,—is the following; viz. that as the Jews, the highly-favoured people of God, were commanded by God himself to wage war, it therefore cannot, say the advocates for war, be sinful for Christians to do the same. This I have briefly noticed elsewhere†.

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\* Matt. xxi. 25. xxii. 21.

† See Letter to the King, p. 20.



Permit me, in addition to what I have there said, to observe, that the wars in which the Israelites were permitted or commanded to engage, were entered into for a particular purpose: this purpose was to root out the worship of false gods, and establish the supremacy of JEHOVAH. In these wars, if they paid strict obedience to God, success appears uniformly to have followed them; but the slightest deviation from his commands brought down upon them the threatened punishments for disobedience. These wars, therefore, had a tendency to exercise the faith, and perfect the obedience, of the Israelites; and also to exhibit to pagan nations the omnipotence of JEHOVAH over their false deities. Considered in this point of view, the Jewish wars afford, even to Christians of the present day, most important lessons. They tell us that God expects rectitude of heart, and that implicit obedience is due to him alone. As the Jews engaged in their wars in consequence of the express command of God, they afford not the smallest ground of excuse for Christians engaging in wars, (much less, for devoting themselves to the military profession,) unless they also can show a divine commission for entering into them, and for suspending the pacific principles of the Gospel.

These wars, my dear Sir, have too often been adduced, on account of their apparent cruelty, to show that the Bible cannot be of divine authority. It must be granted that nothing immoral, unjust, or unworthy of God, can proceed from him: but the question is, were these wars of that description?

The command of God, as delivered by Moses, and set forth in the Received Version of the Bible, appears peremptory; but as the command to *utterly destroy* the seven nations of Canaan, so as to leave none *alive*, was never executed either by Joshua or any of the Judges, nor yet by Samuel, David, nor Solomon, and others after them,—it seems reasonable to suppose that they did not understand this command as obliging them to *massacre* every one, but only *utterly to destroy* their *political* existence. This seems probable from considering the *whole* of the command: Deut. vii. 2—6. “When the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them; nor show mercy unto them; neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them: ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.”—Num. xxxiii. 52, 53. “Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places. And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.”

If the Israelites were positively commanded to

put to death all the men, women, and children of these nations, the commands just enumerated appear unnecessary, if not contradictory; and as the wisest and best of the Jewish rulers never obeyed the injunction to put all to death, it is clear they did not understand it as expressed in our translation of the Bible. If we consider the command to extend only to the *political* destruction of these nations, the justice and mercy of God will be apparent—for what dispensation of the great Ruler of the world can more accord with the divine attributes of justice and mercy, than, by corrective punishments, however severe, to reclaim idolaters from the vice and misery inseparably connected with idolatry, and to establish the worship of JEHOVAH, the only sure source of virtue and happiness?

Having answered some of the most popular arguments drawn from Scripture, that are generally urged in excuse of Christians engaging in war, I beg to transcribe a few remarks of Dr. Paley on this subject. In his chapter on war and military establishments, he says: “Because the Christian Scriptures describe wars, as what they are, as crimes or judgments, some have been led to believe, that it is unlawful to bear arms.” It is unnecessary to say that I draw this inference; and surely, if wars are crimes, no good man ought to engage in them. I know of no argument more cogent to induce us to refrain from any practice, than to say that in the Christian Scriptures it is described as a crime; and surely, my dear Sir, if war is a crime, it cannot require any proof to show that it is criminal to engage in it;



and it must, on his principles, be self-evident that it is criminal to make it a trade to live by. Dr. Paley, however, adds : " But it should be remembered, that it may be necessary for individuals to unite their force, and, for this end, to resign themselves to the direction of a common will ; and yet it may be true, that that will is often actuated by criminal motives, and often determined by destructive purposes." I hardly know how to express the regret I feel, that the author of the *Evidences of Christianity* should have thus expressed himself. He appears to have " put darkness for light." And in speaking of those causes, which, in his opinion, justify war, he is equally to be censured.

"The justifying causes of war," says Dr. Paley, in the same chapter, " are deliberate invasions of right, and the necessity of maintaining such a *balance of power* amongst neighbouring nations, that no single state or confederacy of states, be strong enough to overwhelm the rest. The objects of just war, are, precaution, defence, or reparation. In a larger sense, every just war is a defensive war, inasmuch as every just war supposes an injury perpetrated, or feared\*."

I never read these remarks of Dr. Paley, without feelings of sorrow. I may, my dear Sir, form an erroneous opinion on this subject ; but it appears to me, that this able defender of Christianity, by these sophisticated remarks, has done much to weaken its internal evidences. One of the greatest excellencies of Christianity, and consequently an evidence of its truth, is, that by forbidding violence of every kind, even in our own defence, it is eminently cal-

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\* See Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, ch. xii.

culated to disarm anger, to convert enemies into friends, and consequently, to establish universal peace among men. The justifying causes of war of Dr. Paley, so far from leading to these desirable ends, give the fullest license to shed human blood that the most sanguinary hero or tyrant could desire. There has been no war entered into in modern times that might not be triumphantly defended on both sides, if we allow any validity to the justifying causes of Dr. Paley. On his principles, every war must be a defensive and a just war; for, in our own days, at least, what prince has engaged in war, but for precaution, defence, or *reparation*, or on account of an *injury perpetrated, attempted, or feared*? All these excuses, and many more, are readily formed *by some laborious civilian*, whenever a prince decides upon going to war. Whether, my dear Sir, ought we to regard Dr. Paley as a professor of moral philosophy and a follower of Jesus Christ, or as an able apologist and abettor of such men as Frederic and Napoleon? If war is to be engaged in, let men be consistent, and openly relinquish their pretensions to Christianity and moral philosophy. Let them remember that no man can serve two masters.

I lament that these remarks should have proceeded from the pen of Dr. Paley; they give a sanction to princes and statesmen to engage in war, and afford an excuse to their subjects to dispense with the laws of God. I would ask you, my dear Sir, if it does not seem to be a hard case, that two sovereign princes are permitted, by the code of

Paley, to send out fifty or a hundred thousand men each, to fight a battle royal or a splendid duel, which injures millions,—while two of their subjects, who, like their masters, love fighting, and for pay fight their battles for them, may not have the less destructive privilege of fighting a private duel, which injures, perhaps, no one but themselves? So long as wars continue, duelling will remain, and every effort to stop it will be unavailing. But when men really become Christians, wars and duels will cease of themselves. I would further ask you, if it is not very natural, when kings kill the subjects of each other and deprive them of their property, that their subjects should also like to participate in this royal practice, and to rob and murder on the highway? So long as princes continue to kill and plunder by wholesale, it is very natural to expect to find among their subjects, retail dealers. It is quite in the natural course of things, for inferiors to imitate their betters. I must, however, my dear Sir, beg you will not suppose that, like Dr. Johnson, I defend duelling, much less, that I advocate the cause of highwaymen, or retail dealers in war.

To apply the precepts of Dr. Paley to individuals in private life, would certainly justify highwaymen, and sanction almost every crime, and render this world an *aceldama*. Might not John Thurtell, on Dr. Paley's principles, have pleaded, that he had, at least, as good a right to slay one enemy, as Frederic and Napoleon had to slay their thousands? Might he not have said, that his enemy had been guilty of a *deliberate invasion of his right*, that he



had perpetrated one injury, and that he feared more; and, therefore, by way of *precaution, defence, or reparation*, he had waged a just and a defensive war against him?

On the principles of Montesquieu, also, John Thurtell would have been justified. This popular writer says: "Entre les sociétés le droit de la défense naturelle entraîne quelquefois la nécessité d'attaquer, lorsqu'un peuple voit qu'un plus longue paix en mettrait un autre en état de le détruire, et que l'attaque est dans ce moment le seul moyen d'empêcher cette destruction." If the principles here laid down by these two great men for the government of independent states, were to be applied to individuals, they would give a sanction to one man to kill another whom he may suspect of an intention to kill him;—to one man to maim or wound another, whom he might suspect of an intention to maim or wound him. By such a system, the benevolent precepts of the Gospel would be undermined, if not destroyed; and Christians looking forward to the accomplishment of the prophecies might exclaim, that "Christ is dead in vain."

However contrary such a conduct may be to the real principles of Dr. Paley, he appears to give some sanction to it, when he says, "If the cause be justifiable, all the means that appear necessary to the end, are justifiable also." If we connect this with the *justifiable causes* of war already mentioned, we may infer, that if one king is afraid of the growing power of another, he has justifiable cause for waging *defensive* war against him; and (the cause of the

war being justifiable,) all the means of bringing it to an end, are also justifiable. On the principles of moral philosophy, instead of killing, in what is called an honourable way, fifty or a hundred thousand of his enemy's subjects, and making bonfires of their dwellings,—would not a prince display more mercy, and, consequently, more moral philosophy, in employing an assassin, or poison, to remove *hors de combat* the king who *has been guilty of a deliberate invasion of his rights*, and this either *to obtain reparation*, or by way of *precaution and self-defence*? And, *the cause being justifiable, all the means that appear necessary to the end, are justifiable also.*

It is painful to make remarks like these, on the writings of one of the ablest defenders of Christianity: but the inferences I have drawn from the writings of this popular author, appear to me to be legitimate: and however high Dr. Paley may rank in our own country, as a moralist, I think that any king, or state, that publicly professed to be guided by the principles he advocates, would be shunned and detested by every nation that, like the sovereigns united in holy alliance, might entertain more correct views of moral philosophy, or rather, of Christian morals\*.

After what I have stated, I think I shall not be taxed with presumption, in affirming, that (however unintentionally) Dr. Paley, Bishop Porteus, and Montesquieu, and a multitude of great men, “have

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\* See letter to the King, p. 21.

called evil good, and good evil ;" that they have "put light for darkness, and darkness for light." May we not also join with the inspired writer, and say of the nations who have adopted such principles, "*Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them.*"

Though the writings of Machiavel have by many been much abused ; yet, on the subject of war and the military profession, his views appear more consonant with the precepts of Jesus, than those of the writers I have quoted. He says :

"War being a profession by which men cannot live honourably at all times, it is not to be taken up as a trade, unless it be by a commonwealth or a kingdom ; and if they be well constituted, they will neither of them suffer any of their citizens or subjects, or any other good man, to make it his business ; for he will never be thought a good man who takes upon him an employment by which, if he would reap any profit at any time, he is obliged to be false, and rapacious, and cruel, and to entertain several other qualities that are not consistent in a good man ; nor can any man, great or small, who makes war his profession, be otherwise than vicious. Have you not a proverb, which confirms what I say, that ' War makes thieves, and peace brings them to the gallows ?' The same author observes ; that Rome, while it was well governed, (which was till the reign of the Gracchi,) had never any soldier who made it his profession to be so ; by which means few of them were dissolute."

I feel much satisfaction in believing that our armies and fleets, at least as to a considerable portion of them, are now composed of men of a very different character from that of military men in the



days of Machiavel. Of those of the present day, many are, no doubt, men of the very best intentions, men of true benevolence and unaffected piety. I rejoice in believing that this is the case, inasmuch as I consider it as a preparatory step towards their "beating their swords into ploughshares." I am not singular in thinking it probable, that, as military men become enlightened by literature and science, and imbued with Christian principles, they will cease to be members of standing armies. These armies, if not conquered by superior armies, necessarily lead to despotism; and despotism seldom fails to produce the downfall of a nation, and with it the downfall of Christian principles; for Christianity and despotism cannot thrive together. Bigotry and despotism may go hand in hand, and have generally done so; but Christianity, at the same time that it inculcates submission to the powers that be, commands us to obey God rather than man; and that when we render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, we must remember to render unto God the things which are God's.

How far military men by trade or profession can comply with the first principles of our religion, is a question of high importance to the soldier, the statesman, and the Christian; and particularly to the Christian minister; it being his peculiar and obvious duty to "recall to the faith once delivered to the saints," those who have strayed from it.

In the present state of the world, we appear to have no alternative between relapsing into vice and *gross darkness*, or proceeding in the paths of

science and literature, enlightened by the sunbeams of Christianity, and advancing to the happy epoch when men shall "cease to learn war."

War, and war alone, can replunge the world into that abyss of darkness and barbarism, from which it is emerging. That ministers of all denominations, Protestant and Catholic, Churchmen and Dissenters, may stimulate each other in promoting the glorious cause of "peace on earth, and universal good-will among men" of all nations, will ever be my ardent prayer and wish.

I remain,

&c. &c.

## POSTSCRIPT:

Or *A SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER* addressed to the Editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, on his Review of the First Part of these Letters, and humbly submitted to the serious consideration of Editors of Reviews, Magazines, Newspapers, &c.\*

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"Believest thou the prophets?"

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IN the present state of civilized society, there are no individuals who exercise a more commanding influence over the opinions and morals of mankind, than the editors of periodical publications. If this influence is exerted in the cause of

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\* This Letter which was printed along with the *Series of Letters*, was also printed separately for gratuitous distribution among Editors and Reviewers, preceded by the following PREFACE:—

The following Letter is subjoined to Part II. of the author's *Observations on the Causes and Evils of War*, &c. It is printed separately from that work, chiefly for gratuitous circulation among the Editors of Reviews, Magazines, and Newspapers. The author hopes that those to whom it is thus presented, will excuse the liberty he takes, and accept it as a token of his good-will towards them and all mankind: it is with a view to excite their attention to a subject closely connected with the happiness of the world, and in which he feels a deep interest, that the author entreats their attention to the following Letter.

A more deadly enemy to the Christian religion than war, can scarcely be imagined, whether we survey it in the countries where that religion is professed, or in those where it is vainly endeavoured to be propagated. To war, also, we may attribute, in no small degree, the evils under which, as a nation, we are now labouring, and the still greater calamities which threaten us. Should the storm pass away, and the blessing of peace be continued to us, we may hope, by the aid of Christianity, to attain so high a degree of moral excellence, that



religion and of truth, the benefit to society must be great; and the editor who thus uses his influence, will promote the best interests of mankind, and be justly entitled to public gratitude and reward. If, on the contrary, he espouses the cause of error or vice, his power of injuring society is great, and he lays himself open to, and justly deserves, public censure. Believing that in your strictures on a late pamphlet of mine, entitled, *Observations on the Causes and Evils of War*, &c. you have, unintentionally, become the advocate of error I can need no apology for thus publicly addressing you.

Though you have not treated what I have written with much courtesy, yet you have treated it with seriousness, and perhaps I ought to thank you for having at all noticed my

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the war spirit may be subdued in us, and we may become a chosen instrument, in the hands of Omnipotence, for diffusing peace and "the knowledge of the Lord, till *they* shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea;" till "men shall learn war no more;" and then "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree," in happy security and abundance.

So little has this important subject occupied the minds of men, that war is generally considered as a necessary evil, an evil connected with some good, and therefore consonant with the divine government of the world; but they consider it to be as unavoidable as storms or earthquakes. Those, indeed, who think at all on the subject, believe, or affect to believe, that a time will come when men will abhor this savage custom; but they also believe that this period is very far distant; and, if they do not expect the change to be accomplished by the miraculous intervention of the Deity, they seem assured that no human exertion will avail. They wish success to the cause of "Peace on earth;" but any endeavour to establish it, they consider to be as vain, as an attempt to arrest the sun in his daily course.

Entertaining different views, and believing that Editors of periodical works, more than any other class of men, have it in their power to bring the important subject into discussion, the author submits the following Letter, and the work of which it forms a part, to the ordeal of their criticism.

pamphlet. In doing this, you appear to have acted either with more courage, or with less discretion, than most of your compeers. From their silence, I am led to form the conclusion, perhaps a very erroneous one, that what I have written is on a very unpopular subject; but, at the same time, so consonant to revealed truth, that, not being able to convict me of error on Christian principles, they prudently remain silent.

In your critique on my pamphlet, contained in No. 1. of your New Series, you tell me, that I have *forgotten that the centurion Cornelius was a soldier*; and you further inform me, that I have not mentioned the admonitions to the men of the cohort, to *be content with their wages*, and to **DO THEIR DUTY**. The perusal of the last two letters, which were nearly ready for the press before I read your critique, will show you that I had not forgotten “that Cornelius was a soldier.” To your latter remark, which relates, I suppose, to the admonition of John the Baptist, I hardly know what to reply, for I have never heard, or read, except in your Magazine, that the Baptist gave to soldiers the advice you mention, viz. **TO DO THEIR DUTY**. I shall be obliged to you to inform me on what authority you state this.

If I may be permitted to form my opinion of you from the tenour of your critique, I should conclude that expedience, not Christian morality, is the compass you steer by. On the subject of universal peace,—a subject highly interesting to philanthropists and good men in all ages,—you, and I believe many other editors, appear to have bestowed little thought or inquiry: and, though passing judgement on others, you seem to have consulted no writer on the important subject of peace, from Grotius or Erasmus, to the small tracts of the London Peace Society. Considering these tracts as elementary works in the science of Peace, if I may so express myself, permit me to recommend them to your attentive perusal.

As I have with a bold and daring hand ventured to give

advice to a reviewer, or editor, permit me to take the further liberty of recommending to you the perusal of the Bible, particularly the pages of the New Testament. As long as Christianity is the established religion of our country, a knowledge of the sacred book, containing its precepts, seems not only useful, but necessary, to editors or reviewers: it will, at least, enable them to quote its sacred pages with the correctness to which they are entitled. The passage to which, as I apprehend, you have been so good as to direct my attention is, in the Oxford edition of the Bible, "Do violence to no man\*," (in the margin, *put no man in fear*,) "neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages."

Now, Sir, had you duly considered the import of these admonitions, which you have so strangely and unpardonably misquoted and misapplied, you would have discovered

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\* *μηδενά διασεισητε* when rendered *do violence to no man*, does not convey the correct meaning of the Baptist. The verb *διασειω* has a specific and different meaning—to *terrify and extract money from any one*. Whether the admonition of the Baptist was addressed to Jewish or Roman soldiers we know not; but it seems probable that these soldiers were placed in Judea to preserve the peace, and to insure the collection of the taxes, rather than for military operations. In whatever light we consider them, the advice of John appears pertinent and suitable; and if followed, must render soldiers not only incapable of violence and bloodshed, but of every minor act which might lead to the commission of these.—Our Saviour, instead of prohibiting adultery, forbids every disposition that could possibly lead to it. In like manner John, instead of condemning violence and bloodshed, inculcates a disposition and frame of mind, that must necessarily incapacitate men for the atrocities of war. In thus acting, he appears to have approved himself the worthy precursor of the PRINCE OF PEACE. If these remarks are correct Dr. Paley, Bp. Porteus and others, appear to have acted very injudiciously in bringing forward this admonition of John to show the lawfulness of the military profession,—it condemns it in the very same way that our Saviour condemns adultery: Matt. v. 28.



that, instead of giving a sanction to the military profession, they negatively condemn it. Obedience to them would, most certainly, annihilate all military establishments, and convert soldiers into cyphers. Of what use, I would ask you, would military men be, who should conscientiously refrain from doing violence to others? They would be as useless as salt that had lost its saltiness, and might be disposed of accordingly.

When you accuse me of not having acted the part of a patriot and a Christian, I feel your censure to be as harsh as I am conscious it is unjust. Your views and mine, concerning Christianity and patriotism, are, I imagine, at variance: you appear to adopt the views of Celsus\*, at least you bring against me the very same charge that he brought against the early Christians; and had you lived in the days of Origen, it is probable you would have told *him* that he was in his dotage, or that he was not acting the part of a Christian and a patriot. You, like Celsus, take expedience for your pilot: I regard implicit obedience to the commands of Christ, and the practice of those virtues which are enjoined by Him, as the best test of a man being at the same time a Christian and a patriot; as the sure foundation for obedience to princes and superiors, and the most certain guides to actions the most noble and heroic.

A casual perusal of the prophecies of the Old Testament, added to a slight knowledge of the Gospel of Peace, will, it is probable, correct an error into which you appear to have fallen. You say, you believe "that the terrible means of destruction by elastic vapour will be a means of terminating the accursed game of war." The study I have recommended to you, will lead you to believe, that an agent more potent than elastic vapour will achieve the desired victory. This agent is the Christian religion. This religion does not address itself exclusively to the patriot or the philanthropist;

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\* See Letter IX. page 176.

to the rich or the poor ; to the learned or the ignorant ; to ages of darkness or those illuminated by science or philosophy ; to the subject or the prince : it is suited to be a blessing to all, and to subdue all to its benign dominion ; it is suited to fulfil the purpose of the benevolent Creator, which is to establish "peace on earth, and good-will among men." This noble purpose, *elastic vapour* is not likely to accomplish.

Should it be asked what good the editors of periodical works can do towards the establishing of universal peace, as they possess no political power over nations : I answer, that their power is over public opinion and morals. Let them, as occasions offer, inculcate those virtues which Christ taught, and deprecate those vices which he condemned. Let them also, as opportunities occur, expose the horrors, the crimes, and the folly of war ; and they will aid the Gospel, the mighty instrument of Omnipotence, in undermining the inhuman system, which has, for so many ages, deluged the world with blood : they will thus effect more than sovereigns, united in holy alliance, can accomplish by the sword. They will effect more than princes, priests, and statesmen united ; for their influence extends to all these ; and this influence must progressively increase with the growing influence of the press ; and the power of both is daily extending, with the extension of education. From the latter we may anticipate, that in less than a century there will be few men, even among those who are called the vulgar, who will not be able to distinguish between truth and error, between genuine Christianity and sophisticated theology. Then, in the language of prophecy, *all shall know the Lord*. If *knowledge is power*, what noble effects may we not expect from it ! though slow in its operations, it is gradually changing the minds of men. It is now, and for ages past has been, working like leaven. Princes and editors may hasten or retard its operation ; but the ultimate triumph of Christianity over false religions ; of knowledge over ignorance ; of truth

over error ; of virtue over vice ; of humanity over cruelty ; of peace over war ; is guaranteed to us by the sure promises of JEHOVAH.

You ask me, as if you thought the question unanswerable, "What would become of England, if all men and officers should follow my example?" If you will tell me, of what use soldiers will be, when they adhere to the advice of the Baptist? or if you will tell me what will become of England, when, instead of being merely a Christian nation, it shall become a nation of Christians? you will have some right to expect a direct answer. I do not, however, wish to avail myself of this, or of any excuse for giving you such an answer at present ; and I will give you one on the very highest authority. When men "shall beat their swords into ploughshares ;" when "they shall learn war no more ;" then (literally or figuratively) "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree ; and none shall make them afraid : for THE MOUTH OF THE LORD OF HOSTS HATH SPOKEN IT\*."

As you have begun, permit me to request that you will continue to animadvert with freedom on what I write ; and I make the same request to all editors and reviewers. Whatever literary imperfections my Letters may exhibit, the principle they advocate is immortal. It is "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." Convinced of the truth of prophecy, I confidently anticipate, that what I have written, and which has been sneered at by you and others, will be held in honour in future ages, when the savage and sanguinary spirit that has for so many centuries disgraced human beings, shall be banished from the earth by the sunbeams of Christianity. This consoling and glorious truth you cannot doubt, if "thou believest the prophets."

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\* Micah iv. 4.



## LETTER IX.

### ON THE PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS RELATING TO WAR.

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“If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.”—*John* xviii. 36.

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MY DEAR SIR,

NUMEROUS volumes have been written by theologians of different sects of Christians, for the purpose of establishing their peculiar religious tenets, by showing that the early Christians held the same opinions as themselves, and this without producing uniformity of opinion. Notwithstanding this has been the case respecting the religious *opinions* of the early Christians, I trust more satisfaction and certainty may be derived from inquiries concerning their *practices*. Opinions may change, and good and conscientious men are the most likely to experience this change; but facts must always remain the same. An inquiry, therefore, into the practices of the early Christians respecting war, will form the chief subject of my present letter. I shall not, however, on an occasion like the present, neglect to notice opinions, particularly those of some of the early Christian Fathers, as these opinions

are important, and expressed with much clearness and precision.

From my having, on evidence which appeared very satisfactory to me, formed a very different opinion, I was lately much surprised at meeting with some extracts from a Sermon preached in 1798, by the then Bishop of Rochester (Dr. Horsley); among these is the following : “ It is little less than a calumny on the Christian religion to pretend, as some have pretended, that defensive war is either contrary to the general spirit of the morality of the Gospel, or forbidden by any particular precept, or discouraged by the example of the first Christians. The notorious fact is, that they scrupled not to serve in the armies of even their heathen sovereigns.”

Although the New Testament is the book that can alone decide what is the duty of Christians respecting war; yet, if we suppose that it leaves us in any doubt on the subject, an inquiry, not only into the practices, but also the opinions of the early Christians, becomes of importance; for as they lived so much nearer to the time of the apostles, they may be supposed to be less liable to error than we are. The assertion that the *early* Christians “scrupled not to serve in the armies of even heathen sovereigns,” may without much difficulty be shown to be both true and false. It may be shown to be strictly true, as it regards one period of the early Christian history; and false, as it regards another period of it. On this subject, as on most subjects where the happiness of mankind and the interests

of Christianity are concerned, an author of great industry and integrity appears to have taken much pains to obtain the best information. He says, "that long after the introduction of the Christian religion into the world,—that is, while the lamp of Christianity burnt pure and bright,—not only the Fathers of the Church held it unlawful for Christians to bear arms, but those who came within the pale of it abstained from the use of them, and this, to the certain loss of their lives; and it was not till Christianity became corrupted, that its followers became soldiers." Again he says, "That as the lamp of Christianity burnt bright in those early times, so those who were illuminated by it, declined the military profession; that as its flame shone less clear, they had less objection to it; and that it was not until Christianity became corrupted, that its followers became soldiers. Thus, in the first two centuries, when Christianity was purest, there are no Christian soldiers on record. In the third century, when it became less pure, there is frequent mention of such soldiers. And in the fourth, when its corruption was fixed, Christians entered generally upon the profession of arms, with as little hesitation as they entered upon any other occupation of life\*."

If the Bishop of Rochester carried his inquiries no further back than the third or fourth century,

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\* See 'Clarkson's Portraiture of Quakerism'; also, his '*Essay on the Doctrines and Practice of the Early Christians, as they relate to War*'.



his remark is correct; but if he meant to apply it to Christians of the first and second centuries, I apprehend he was in error. Instead of indulging in rhetorical flourishes and bold assertion, on a grave and important subject, he ought to have produced historical proof. The author to whom I have referred, has done this, and has quoted at considerable length, authorities of the highest respectability. If there is any fallacy or deficiency in his evidence, I entreat you to point it out; for this is a question, which, like Christianity, involves the happiness and welfare of all mankind.

Not being in possession of originals, I shall make a few remarks, chiefly on the authority of this philanthropist. With respect, then, to the practices of the early Christians, it may be observed, notwithstanding the assertions of Dr. Horsley, that there is no well authenticated instance upon record, of Christians entering into the army for nearly the whole of the first two centuries; but it is true, on the other hand, that they had declined the military profession, as one in which it was not lawful for them to engage. This is evident from the following facts, which reach from about the year 170 to about the year 195. Cassius had rebelled against the emperor Verus, and was slain a short time afterwards. Clodius Albinus in one part of the world, and Pescenius Niger in another, had rebelled against the emperor Severus, and both were slain. Now, suspicion fell, as it always did in these times, upon the Christians, as having been concerned upon these occasions. But Tertullian tells us, in his

“Discourse to Scapula,” that this suspicion was totally groundless. “You defamed us,” says he, “by charging us with having been guilty of treason to our emperors ; but not a Christian could be found in the rebel armies, whether commanded by Cassius, Albinus, or Niger.” These facts are of considerable importance, as the armies alluded to comprehended between one-half and one-third of the standing legions of Rome ; and the circumstance is the more remarkable, as according to Tertullian, Christianity had reached all the places in which these armies were.

That Christians generally, if not universally, refrained from entering into the armies at this period, may be gathered from the distinctions made between soldiers and Christians by Justin the martyr and Tatian. The latter says, “that the Christians declined even military commands.” Clemens of Alexandria makes a similar distinction : he says, speaking of Christians, “The peaceable never used sword or bow.”

The application of the prophecy of Isaiah ii. 2—4, to this subject, supplies direct evidence that the early Christians refrained from war. Justin the martyr, in his first Apology, quoting it, says, “*that these things have come to pass ;*” “and we who once were slayers of one another, do not fight against our enemies.” Apol. cap. 39. p. 67. Ed. Ben. Speaking of the same prophecy, Irenæus (A. D. 167) proves its application to our Saviour, by the fact, that “the followers of Jesus had disused the weapons of war, and no longer knew how to fight.”—

Adv. Hær. lib. iv. cap. 34. p. 275. Ed. Ben. Tertullian also maintains that this prophecy was accomplished as far as the practice of every individual is concerned to whom it is applicable. How differently, my dear Sir, did these pious men reason, from the learned men of our own times. One would think it hardly possible that these early Christian Fathers, and Dr. Paley, Bishop Porteus, and Bishop Horsley, have drawn their opinions concerning war from the same sacred volume. How can we account for this discrepancy, but by supposing either that these learned and pious Fathers were fanatics, or else that Christians of the present day, even enlightened and learned men, have departed from "the faith once delivered to the saints:" or that theological knowledge is yet in its infancy.

The evidence of Celsus the bitter enemy of Christianity, and of Origen its zealous and able defender, were there no other witnesses to show the practice of the early Christians regarding war, would satisfactorily decide the point. Celsus makes it one of his charges against Christians, that, "in his times, they refused to bear arms for the emperor, even in cases of necessity, and when their services would have been accepted." He adds, "that if the rest of the empire were of their opinion, it would soon be overrun by the barbarians." It seems very improbable that Celsus would have made such a charge against the Christians, had not the facts alleged been true, as his falsehood might have been easily detected and exposed. And as the charge against Christians was one of a very



serious nature, it seems very certain that, had he been able, Origen would have rebutted the accusation. So far from attempting this, he admits the facts stated by Celsus, that Christians in his time would not bear arms, and justifies them on *the ground of the unlawfulness of war*.

It may here be observed, that Tertullian, in another part of his works, speaks of Christians who were engaged together with their heathen countrymen in military pursuits. He plainly condemns this practice; but "in his time, if not before," says Dr. Jortin, "there were some Christian soldiers, and it is hard to conceive how they could maintain their innocence in that station, and avoid such dissimulation and such practices as were scarcely allowable. It is to be supposed, that Christians kept out of the army as much as they possibly could." To show the depravity of some Christians of this period, Tertullian states the very extraordinary fact of manufacturers of idols being admitted into the ecclesiastical order. But, in his *Soldiers' Garland*, he clearly expresses his opinion respecting the lawfulness of the military profession, when he says, "Can a soldier's life be lawful, when Christ has said that 'he who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword.'" And again, "shall he who is not to revenge his own wrongs, be instrumental in bringing others into chains, imprisonment, torment, and death?"

With respect to the *opinions* of the first Christian writers after the Apostles, or of those who are

usually styled the Fathers of the Church, relative to war, I believe we shall find them alike for nearly three hundred years, if not for a longer period. JUSTIN the martyr, one of the earliest of those of the second century, *considers war as unlawful*. He makes, also, *the devil the author of all war*. No severer censure could have been passed upon it than this, when we consider it as coming from the lips of an early Christian. The sentiment, too, was contrary to the prevailing opinions of the times, when, of all professions, that of war was most honourable, and was the only one that was considered to lead to glory. It resulted, therefore, in all probability, from the new views which Justin had acquired by a perusal of such of the scriptures as had fallen into his hands.

TATIAN, who was a disciple of Justin, in his Oration to the Greeks, speaks in the same terms on the same subject.

From various expressions of CLEMENS of Alexandria, a contemporary of the latter, we collect his opinion to be decisive also, against the lawfulness of war.

CYPRIAN, in his *Epistle to Donatus*, takes a view of such customs in his own times as he conceived to be repugnant to the spirit or letter of the Gospel, and then remarks: "When a single murder is committed, it shall be deemed perhaps a crime; but that crime shall commence a virtue, when committed under the shelter of public authority: so that punishment is not rated by the measure of the guilt;

but the more enormous the crime is, so much the greater is the chance of impunity\*.

LACTANTIUS says: "It can never be lawful for a righteous man to go to war, whose warfare is righteousness itself." And in another place he observes, that "No exception can be made with respect to this command of God. It can never be lawful to kill a man, whose person the Divine Being designed to be sacred as to violence."

I have now produced a collection of *facts*, together with the *opinions* of some of the best early Christian writers; all tending to show, that for nearly the whole of the first two centuries, none of those who were considered as *real* Christians by the writers I have quoted, were members of the military profession; and I think that these Fathers of the Church would have considered the remarks of Dr. Horsley as little less than a calumny upon the early Christians, and highly injurious to Christianity itself. This opinion will, I think, receive confirmation from the church history of the succeeding centuries, to which I shall have occasion to request your attention in my next letter.

I remain, &c.

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\* This was the opinion of Dr. Porteus at one period of his life. See Letter VI. p. 123.



## LETTER X.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

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“Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”—*Matt. xxvi. 52.*

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MY DEAR SIR,

IT having been frequently remarked, that the early Christians refrained from war, not on account of its unlawfulness, but because of the idolatrous services required from military men in the Roman armies; it is necessary that I should distinctly show that they regarded the unlawfulness of war, independent of every other consideration, as a just cause for refraining from, or for quitting the military profession. This, indeed, appears obvious from what has been already said; but as this is a matter of moment, and some stress has been laid upon this argument, it seems desirable, in the first place, to ascertain this fact. The case of Maximilian, preserved in the Acts of Ruinart, is strictly in point.

Maximilian having been brought before the tribunal, in order to be enrolled as a soldier, Dion, the proconsul, asked him his name. Maximilian, turning to him, replied, “Why wouldest thou know my name? I am a Christian, and cannot fight.”

Upon being enrolled, Dion bid the officer mark him. But Maximilian refused to be marked, still asserting that he was a Christian. Upon which, Dion instantly replied, "Bear arms, or thou shalt die."—To this Maximilian answered, "I cannot fight, if I die: I am not a soldier of this world, but a soldier of God."—Dion then said, "Who has persuaded thee to behave thus?"—Maximilian answered, "My own mind, and He who hath called me." Dion then spoke to his father, and bade him persuade his son. But his father observed, that his son knew his own mind, and what it was best for him to do.

After this had passed, Dion addressed Maximilian again in these words: "Take thy arms, and receive the mark."—"I can receive no such mark," said Maximilian; "I have already the mark of Christ."—Upon which, Dion said, "I will send thee quickly to thy Christ."—"Thou mayest do so," he replied, "but the glory will be mine."

Dion then bade the officer to mark him. But Maximilian still persisted in refusing, and spoke thus: "I cannot receive the mark of this world. And if thou shouldest give me the mark, I will destroy it. It will avail nothing. I am a Christian, and it is not lawful for me to wear such a mark about my neck, when I have received the saving mark of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, whom thou knowest not, who died to give us life, and whom God gave for our sins. Him all we Christians obey. Him we follow, as the Restorer of our life, and the Author of our salvation."

Dion instantly replied to this, "Take thy arms and receive the mark, or thou shalt suffer a miserable death."—"But I shall not perish," said Maximilian, "my name is already enrolled with Christ. I cannot fight."

Dion said, "Consider, then, thy youth, and bear arms. The profession of arms becomes a young man."—Maximilian replied, "My arms are with the Lord, I cannot fight for any earthly consideration. I am now a Christian."

Dion, the proconsul, said, "Among the life-guards of our masters Dioclesian and Maximinian, and Constantius and Maximus, there are Christian soldiers, and they fight."—Maximilian answered, "They know best what is most expedient for them; but I am a Christian, and it is unlawful to do evil."

Dion said, "Take thy arms. Despise not the profession of a soldier, lest thou perish miserably."—"But I shall not perish," says Maximilian; "and if I should leave this world, my soul will live with Christ the Lord."

Dion then ordered his name to be struck from the roll; and when this was done, he proceeded, "Because out of thy rebellious spirit thou hast refused to bear arms, thou shalt be punished according to thy deserts, for an example to others." And then he delivered the following sentence: "Maximilian! because thou hast refused to bear arms, thou shalt die by the sword."—Maximilian replied, "Thanks be to God!"

The case of Maximilian exhibits to us the noble and instructive example of a conscientious Christian suffering death, rather than compromise his duty. The idolatrous services required of Roman soldiers formed no part of the objections he urged. I will now give you the case of a man of the rank of a centurion, who, when in the army, was converted to Christianity, and from conscientious motives withdrew from it, preferring the death of a martyr, to the life of a soldier.

Marcellus was a centurion in the legion called 'Trajana.' On a festival given in honour of the birth-day of Galerius, he threw down his military belt at the head of the legion, and in the face of the standards declared with a loud voice, that he would



no longer serve in the army, for he had become a Christian. "I hold in detestation," says he, addressing himself to all the soldiers, "the worship of your gods; gods which are made of wood and stone; gods which are deaf and dumb." So far Marcellus seems to have been influenced, in his desertion of a military life, by the idolatry connected with it. But let us hear him further on the same subject. "It is not lawful," says he, "for a Christian who is the servant of Christ the Lord, to bear arms for any earthly consideration." After a delay of more than three months in prison after this transaction, which delay was allowed for the purpose of sparing him, he was brought before the prefect. There he had an opportunity of correcting his former expressions. But as he persisted in the same sentiments, he suffered. It is remarkable that, almost immediately after his execution, Cassian, who was the notary to the same legion, refused to serve any longer, by publicly throwing his pen and account-book upon the ground, and declaring at the same time, that the sentence of Marcellus was unjust. When taken up by the order of Aurelianus Agricolaus, he is described, by the record preserved by Ruinart, to have avowed the same sentiments as Marcellus, and like him, to have suffered death\*.

I cannot pass by the affecting statements concerning Maximilian and Marcellus, without ven-

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\* "The accounts of these martyrdoms," says Gibbon, "bear every mark of truth and authenticity."—See *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. ii. p. 464.

turing to offer to you a few reflections, that these interesting narratives call forth. How are we, my dear Sir, to account for the fact, that during the first two centuries, the professors of Christianity were more zealous, and more in earnest about their religion, than those of later ages? The fact appears to be established beyond all doubt, that the early Christians, taking the Scriptures for their guide, considered the military profession as unlawful, and preferred death to a participation in its crimes. Professing to be guided by the very same sacred book, Christians, for more than a thousand years past, have with very few exceptions, maintained that this book sanctions men, when licensed by their rulers, to devote themselves to the trade of war, and deliberately to slaughter each other by thousands. The benevolent and pacific spirit of the present age, no doubt, far surpasses that of preceding ones; but how far, my dear Sir, do we fall short of that noble and heroic spirit, that devotion to the will of God, that love and reverence for the Saviour and Benefactor of the human race, and that *love for the brethren*, which peculiarly distinguished the early Christians! Compared to them, the best Churches in Christendom, and the mass of professing Christians in all countries, do not appear to be in a better state than the Church of Laodicea: and may not a similar woe be denounced against them\*?

However gratifying and instructive it may be to

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\* Rev. iii. 14—16.

the lovers of peace to be informed of the practices and opinions of the early Christians, their conduct can afford us no positive rule for ours; they are quoted here merely to show that these good men interpreted the Scriptures, our only sure guide, in the very same way that the members of the Peace Societies, these Utopian reformers, now interpret them. I quote them also, as I am upon my defence, and writing my apology, to show, that instead of exposing myself to censure, for dereliction of duty as a Christian and a patriot, by withdrawing myself from my profession, I am sanctioned by the opinions and example of some of the wisest and best men in the purest ages of the Christian history.

Of the simple and amiable manners, and strict and unbending integrity of the early Christians, Pliny bore honourable testimony\*. These manners, which continued to distinguish the followers of Christ during the first two centuries, were greatly deteriorated during the third century, when it must be admitted that there were numbers of men in the Roman armies who were called Christians. But these men, whatever name they might bear, were either idolators, or persons of no fixed principles,

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\* "Pliny's letter," as Mr. Melmoth observes in a note upon the passage, "is esteemed as almost the only genuine monument of ecclesiastical antiquity relating to the times immediately succeeding the apostles, it being written at most not above forty years after the death of St. Paul. It was preserved by the Christians themselves, as a clear and unsuspecting evidence of the purity of their doctrines, and is frequently appealed to by the early writers of the Church against the calumnies of their adversaries." See *Pliny*: Encyclopædia Britannica.



moral or religious. The oath required to be taken by Roman soldiers, was not, with respect to Christians serving in their armies, rescinded, or dispensed with, till the following, or fourth century. Instead of Christians being required to take the same oath as the Roman soldiers, this dispensation admitted them into their armies upon "swearing by God, by Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, and by the majesty of the emperor, which, next to God, was to be loved and honoured by mankind." Whether a real Christian, entertaining a proper reverence for the Deity, ought to submit to take such an oath, may justly be questioned; but its existence leads us to suppose, that Christians, at that early period, had widely departed from their primitive simplicity and purity. Indeed, the gross darkness, which for so many succeeding ages nearly extinguished the lamp of Christianity, had then commenced. Men, denominated Christians, became, as already observed, so far lost to every just sense of Christian duty, as to accept of heathen priesthods. As a proof of this, the Council of Elvira of this century was forced to make several canons to forbid such scandalous usages, which canons are now extant.

Notwithstanding this deplorable state of things, and the still worse state that succeeded it, we find evidence, either direct or indirect, that at all periods of the Christian history, there were some who testified that war is inaccordant with the precepts of Christianity. In the twelfth canon of the Council of Nice, (A. D. 325,) a long period of excommunication is attached, as a penalty on the conduct of those

persons who, having once in the ardour of their early faith renounced the military calling, were persuaded, by the force of bribes, to return to it. From hence we may infer, that the Nicene Fathers considered the military profession as altogether incompatible with a high state of Christian morality. What, my dear Sir, would the venerable fathers of this council have said to the half-pay *military ecclesiastics* of the present day,—to men who, being no longer wanted to kill the bodies of their fellow-men, (by way of gaining a livelihood,) *feel a call* to save their souls. Would not the members of the Council of Elvira have told these military clericals, that they acted upon the same principle as those nominal Christians who accepted heathen priesthoods? And what would they have said to our electioneering clericals, Catholic or Protestant? What indeed would they have said to the sophistries of Doctors Paley, Porteus, and Horsley?

But to return from this digression, and pursue my inquiries concerning the practices of Christians in later ages.

Lardner remarks on a work ascribed to Arche-laüs, a bishop of Mesopotamia, apparently written in the fourth century,—that he seems to have condemned all war as unlawful; for, relating that some Roman soldiers, charmed with the piety and generosity of Marcellus, were induced to embrace the Christian religion, he says that “they immediately forsook the profession of arms.”

In the following, or fifth century, Pope Leo declared it to be “contrary to the rules of the Church,

that persons, after the action of penance, should revert to the warfare of the world\*." Epist. ii.

A synod held in England under William the Conqueror, declared, that those who fought only for the hopes of reward, ought to do penance as for murder; following, probably, the decision of St. Augustine, "*Militare non est delictum, sed propter prædam militare peccatum est.*" Were this enforced in the present day, how few fighting men, my dear Sir, would escape the most severe penance? Instead of being distinguished by the splendid insignia of military orders, and rewarded with pensions, not a few (according to the old regime) would be condemned to wear sackcloth, and observe a perpetual lent. Nay, may we not expect that the bishops and legislators of these ages, which we are led to consider as ages distinguished by mental darkness and superstition, will rise up in judgement against the prelates and legislators of modern times and condemn them? for, from what has been said, they must, like Erasmus, have condemned the lethargic ministers of the Gospel of Peace.

The Patarines, or Gazari, the Puritans of Italy in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, kept alive the cause of truth, liberty, and benevolence. They held several tenets in common with those now called Quakers, particularly with respect to oaths and war; considering it as unlawful to bear arms, or to kill mankind.

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\* "*Contrariam esse ecclesiasticis, post pœnitentiæ actionem, redire ad militiam secularem.*"—*Quoted by Grotius, 'De Jure Belli,' lib. I. cap. ii. § 9.*



To these succeeded other heralds of the Reformation, who, under the name of Waldenses, Albigenes, &c. were scattered over a great part of Europe, and of whom the following account is given by Robinson.

“ Authentic records in France assure us that a people of a certain description were drawn from thence in the twelfth century. Bohemian records, of equal authenticity, inform us, that some of the same description arrived in Bohemia at the same time, and settled near a hundred miles from Prague, at Satz and Lann, on the river Eger, just on the borders of the kingdom. Almost two hundred years after, another undoubted record of the same country mentions a people of the same description, some as burnt at Prague, and others as inhabiting the borders of the kingdom; and, a hundred and fifty years after that, we find a people of the same description settled by connivance in the metropolis, and several other parts of the kingdom. About one hundred and twenty years lower, we find a people of the same country, living under the protection of law, on the estate of prince Lichtenstein, exactly like all the former, and about thirty or forty thousand in number. The religious character of this people is so very different from that of all others, that the likeness is not easily mistaken. They had no priests, but taught one another. They had no private property, for they held all things jointly. They executed no offices, and neither exacted nor took oaths. *They bore no arms, and rather chose to suffer than resist wrong.* They held every thing in the Church of Rome in abhorrence, and worshiped God, only by adoring his perfections, and endeavouring to imitate his goodness. They thought Christianity wanted no comment, and they professed the belief of that, by being baptized, and their love to Christ and one another, by receiving the Lord’s supper. They aspired at neither wealth nor power, and their plan was industry. We have shown how highly pro-

bable it is that Bohemia afforded them work, wages, and a secure asylum, which was all they wanted. If these be facts, they are facts that do honour to human nature; they exhibit in the great picture of the world, a few small figures in a back-ground, unstained with the blood, and unruffled with the disputes of their fellow-creatures. It was their wisdom in their times, not to come forward to deliver apologies to the world, and creeds, with flattering prefaces, to princes; the turbulence of the crowd would have caused the still voice of reason not to be heard."—*Ecclesiastical Researches*, p. 527.

The Anabaptists, at their first rise, and also the early Socinians, generally maintained the unlawfulness of all war, and of the military profession; but I believe that both these sects have ceased to regard the military profession as inaccordant with the precepts of Jesus. The Society of Friends and the Moravians, both held in little repute by the learned and the great, are the only religious communities in our country, which now maintain the principle, that *all* war is unlawful under the Gospel dispensation. The hasty sketch here given of the history of the pacific principles of Christianity, will go far to show, that God has never, since the promulgation of the Gospel, left himself without faithful and true witnesses, who have, at the expense of their lives, testified to the unlawfulness of all war under the Christian dispensation. I rejoice, however, in the belief, that the defence of the pacific principles of the Gospel is not now, as heretofore, confined to any particular sects or communities of Christians. A new era has arrived, and societies of men have sprung up within the last ten or twelve years in

England, in America, and in various parts of the world, for the professed purpose of promoting permanent and universal peace. Like the Bible Societies, these Societies consist of men of all religious creeds, and their object is, assuredly, highly important: but if the Bible Societies have had their opponents among the "many wise and many mighty," we cannot wonder at the opposition the Peace Societies have had to encounter: but I trust that their cause is the cause of truth;—that it is the cause of the God of all truth; and that it must and will triumph over all opposition. Prophecy assures us that these hopes are built on a solid foundation.

Having so frequently referred to the works of the early Christian writers; those who read these Letters may be led to imagine, either that I am, or that I wish to pass myself off for a literary character: I think it, therefore, necessary to observe, that many of the quotations I have made are at second-hand. I have not, like you, a valuable library to refer to; nor, if I had this advantage, do I profess to have the ability of critically ascertaining the meaning of the different authors I have quoted. The historical matter I have introduced in this Letter, is chiefly on the authority of Mr. Clarkson, Mr. John Gurney, Mr. J. W. Fox, and the anonymous author of the *Pictures of War*. If I have, by any of them, been led into error, it will be an easy matter for you, as a scholar, with access to the originals, to correct me: in doing this, you will confer an obligation on myself, and perform an acceptable service to the lovers of peace and of truth.

I have now, my dear Sir, travelled through a



large portion of my undertaking. To you, and others, I fear, the perusal of these Letters may be tedious and irksome ; to myself the writing of them has been a most gratifying employment ; as, at every step I have advanced in my work, fresh conviction has poured in upon my mind, that the principles I have advocated, are consonant with the revealed will of God.

In my remaining Letters I purpose to enter upon the most difficult part of my task, which is to persuade you, and others, to embrace my opinions respecting *defensive* war ; by showing, or endeavouring to show, that it is irreconcilable with just notions of religion, natural and revealed, and particularly that it is inaccordant with the very first rudiments of Christianity. I am aware of the difficulties attending my attempt, and am not so sanguine as to expect much present success from my endeavours : the most I can hope to accomplish is, to draw attention to a subject which, however disregarded and scoffed at in the present day, will, most certainly, in the forth-coming ages of the world, occupy the attention of virtuous and enlightened Christians ; a subject, the serious consideration of which will, and that, perhaps, at no very distant period, paralyse the uplifted arm of the warrior, and cause him, when about to take away the life of a fellow-creature, to remember the words of the Saviour and Benefactor of mankind : “ Put up again thy sword into his place ; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”

I remain, &c.

## LETTER XI.

### THE PROFESSION OF ARMS INACCORDANT WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL RELIGION.

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“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.—*Rom. ii. 14.*”

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MY DEAR SIR,

WHEN we contemplate the innumerable worlds which the great Creator has formed for his glory, and the innumerable orders of beings which he has created for their happiness, we have the most powerful incitements to gratitude and adoration, to humility, and an entire self-devotion to the “GREAT FIRST CAUSE.”

Still greater reason have we to be impressed with these feelings, when we consider that the High and Holy One, who created all things, hath not only given us by nature the knowledge of good and evil, or a law written in our hearts; but hath also given us a written law; a revelation of his will, in every way adapted to our wants; and calculated to render us comfortable in this our probationary state, and to fit us for unalloyed felicity for an eternity of ages.

Among the various transgressions of these sacred laws, whether written in our hearts, or in the sacred pages of inspiration, all others seem to sink into insignificance when compared with the atrocities of war. Wild animals, destitute of reason and any sense of duty to their Maker, are generally armed with natural weapons of defence and annoyance, and use them for these purposes ; but man, made in the image of God, and qualified to enjoy and communicate acts of benevolence, goodness and love, appears to surpass the whole brute creation in ferocity and cruelty\*. It seems scarcely within the verge of possibility to imagine any thing more savage, more irreligious, more irrational, or more unnatural, than that beings formed for such noble purposes, and particularly those professing Christianity, should meet by thousands and hundreds of thousands, for the express purpose of deliberately killing each other. If Christianity is, indeed, a true religion ; if it proceeds from a wise, a just, and good God, it would seem that no other proof could be wanted to show that such a practice must be directly opposed to the Divine will. But war, at least defensive war, is not only advocated, but even sanctified by the ministers of the Gospel of Peace, who, forming part of adverse armies, pray to the God of all peace, to give them the victory ; *i. e.* to enable them to kill as many as possible of

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\* See Letter IV. p. 99. Extract from Mr. Burke's *Vindication of Natural Society*.



their brethren ; and after the battle, they thank him for having enabled them to do so.

Had mankind no written law ; were the Scriptures of truth extinct,—the book of Nature seems intended to teach them the duties not only of forbearance and forgiveness, but of amity and love. The celestial bodies, as Erasmus observes, seem to move with harmony and concord ; and nothing like war or discord can be discovered in their motions.—In the human body, which may be regarded as a symbol of the political body, all is union and harmonious co-operation. Among animals even the most ferocious, nothing like war with their own kind is to be found. Even the very trees and the plants seem to condemn the warrior—they speak the language of amity and love. The vine embraces the elm, and other plants cling to the vine. The very stones seem to bear witness against man—the loadstone embraces the loadstone ; and the attraction of cohesion, as a law of love, pervades all inanimate nature. What is still a greater reproach to man, the accursed spirits entertain for each other more unanimity than man for man.

“ Devil with devil damn’d, firm concord hold,  
Men only disagree of creatures rational.”

Having in the preceding Letters exposed a few of the trivial causes which have produced war and all its horrors ; with the insidious and antichristian arts frequently resorted to by statesmen, to gloss over their guilt in exciting the inhabitants of one nation to rob and plunder those of another ; having also faintly sketched a few of the evils,

moral and physical, proceeding from war and military establishments; and further shown that in the earliest and best ages of Christianity, the followers of our Lord never engaged in war under any circumstances, on account of its unlawfulness,—I might, on a subject of minor importance, have laid down my pen, under the impression that a custom so entirely subversive of human happiness and virtue must necessarily be irreconcilable with the will of a wise, gracious, and just God.—It might, indeed, be presumed *a priori*, that a religion to be promulgated by the Prince of Peace, would never sanction its votaries to slaughter each other. So strong, however, are the prejudices of mankind, and so potent the incitements for many to desire the continuance of a practice so truly disgraceful to the religion of Christ, that it becomes necessary for the friend of peace to give line upon line and precept upon precept.

It is, perhaps, one of the strongest internal evidences of the truth of Christianity, that its precepts are agreeable to just notions of natural religion, and fitted to promote the happiness of beings formed as men are. Previous, therefore, to inquiring how far war is reconcileable with the precepts of revealed religion, I shall endeavour, in this Letter, to show that the practice of war is inaccordant with the principles of natural religion.

One great and leading principle pervades all religious systems, whether natural or revealed; this is, the paternal character of the Deity. This character, though not generally discoverable by human reason,

is so consonant with it, that it only requires to be fairly set before us to command our assent, independent of revelation. The religion of the Jews renders this principle more clear; but it is in the Christian revelation alone that the resplendent truth is ascertained,—that God is not only the Creator, but also the Protector, the Friend, the FATHER of men, and that men of all nations are *brethren*, and fellow heirs of eternal life. But it is of natural religion only that I would speak in this Letter.

From the light of nature alone, men of reflection have been able to ascertain to the highest degree of probability, amounting, indeed, to moral certainty, that there is a God. They have also been able, from contemplating the animal and vegetable world, to arrive at the conclusion that he is wise, powerful, and benevolent.

Epictetus says: \* “If what philosophers say of the kindred between God and men be true; what has any one to do, but like Socrates, when he is asked what countryman he is, never to say that he is a citizen of Athens, or of Corinth, but of the world.”—And “Why may not (such a one) call himself a citizen of the world? Why not a son of God? And, why shall he fear any thing that happens among men? Shall the kindred to Cæsar, or any other great man of Rome, enable a man to live secure above contempt, and void of all fear whatever? and shall not having God for our Maker, and Father, and Guardian, free us from griefs and terrors?”

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\* Book I. Chap. 9.



Other heathen sages have expressed themselves in similar terms, concerning the existence of one Supreme God, and his *parental* character; and also of the relation in which men stand as *brethren*. It would seem therefore to require no other proof that it is their duty to refrain from killing and murdering each other, either singly or in greater numbers.

From the way in which man is formed, we may also safely come to the conclusion, that he was designed, by his benevolent Creator, for purposes the very reverse of annoying or destroying his own species. On this subject, permit me to quote the learned Erasmus, the friend of peace, and of Christianity.

"Man," says he, "is brought into the world naked, weak, tender, unarmed; his flesh of the softest texture, his skin smooth and delicate, and susceptible of the slightest injury. There is nothing observable in his limbs adapted to fighting, or to violence. Unable either to speak or walk, or help himself to food, he can only implore relief by tears and wailing; so that from this circumstance alone might he collected that man is an animal born for that love and friendship, which is formed and cemented by the mutual interchange of benevolent offices. Moreover, nature evidently intended that man should consider himself indebted for the boon of life, not so much to herself, as to the kindness of his fellow-man; that he might perceive himself designed for social affections, and the attachments of friendship and love. Then she gave him a countenance, not frightful and forbidding, but mild and placid, intimating, by external signs, the benignity of his disposition. She gave him eyes full of affectionate expression, the indexes of a mind delighting in social sympathy. She gave him arms to embrace his fellow-creatures. She gave him lips to express a union of heart and

soul. She gave him alone the power of laughing, a mark of the joy of which he is susceptible. She gave him tears, the symbol of clemency and compassion. She gave him a voice, not a menacing and frightful yell, but bland, soothing, and friendly. Not satisfied with these marks of her peculiar favour, she bestowed on him alone the use of speech and reason: a gift which tends, more than any other, to conciliate and cherish benevolence, and a desire of rendering mutual services; so that nothing among human creatures might be done by violence."

From the following fable, extracted from the *Idler*, the great Doctor Johnson appears, at one period of his life, to have entertained opinions not very dissimilar to those of Erasmus. After some prefatory remarks concerning the supposed power of animals to impart their thoughts to each other, he says:

"A shepherd of Bohemia has, by long abode in the forests, enabled himself to understand the voice of birds; at least he relates with great confidence, a story, of which the credibility is left to be considered by the learned.

"As I was sitting," said he, "within a hollow rock, and watching my sheep in the valley, I heard two vultures interchangeably crying on the summit of the cliff. Both voices were earnest and deliberate. My curiosity prevailed over my care of the flock. I climbed slowly and silently from crag to crag, concealed among the shrubs, till I found a cavity in which I might sit and listen, without suffering or giving disturbance.

"I soon perceived that my labour would be well repaid, for an old vulture was sitting on a naked prominence, with her young about her, whom she was instructing in the arts of a vulture's life, and preparing, by the last lecture, for their final dismission to the mountains and the skies.

"My children," said the vulture, "you will the less want my instructions, because you have had my practice before

your eyes ; you have seen me snatch from the farm, the household fowl ; you have seen me seize the leveret in the bush, and the kid in the pasture ; you know how to fix your talons, and how to balance your flight when you are laden with your prey. But you remember the taste of more delicious food : I have often regaled you with the flesh of man.' ' Tell us,' said the young vultures, ' where man may be found, and how he may be known, his flesh is surely the natural food of a vulture. Why have you never brought a man in your talons to the nest ?' ' He is too bulky,' said the mother : ' when we find a man, we can only tear away his flesh, and leave his bones on the ground.' ' Since man is so big,' said the young ones, ' how do you kill him ? You are afraid of the wolf and the bear, by what power are vultures superior to man ? is man more defenceless than a sheep ?' ' We have not the strength of man,' returned the mother, ' and I am sometimes in doubt whether we have his subtilty ; and the vultures would seldom feed upon his flesh, had not nature, that devoted him to our uses, infused into him a strange ferocity, which I have never observed in any other being that feeds upon the earth. Two herds of men will often meet, and shake the earth with noise, and fill the air with fire. When you hear noise, and see fire, which flashes along the ground, hasten to the place, with your swiftest wing, for men are surely destroying one another ; you will find the ground smoking with blood and covered with carcases, of which many are dismembered and mangled for the use of the vulture.' ' But when men have killed their prey,' said the pupil, ' why do they not eat it ? When the wolf has killed a sheep, he suffers not the vulture to touch it till he has satisfied himself. Is not man another kind of wolf ?' ' Man,' said the mother, ' is the only beast who kills what he does not devour, and this quality makes him so much a benefactor to our species.' ' If men kill our prey, and lay it in our way,' said the young one, ' what need shall we have of labouring for ourselves ?' ' Because man will sometimes,' replied the mother, ' remain for a long time quiet in



his den. The old vultures will tell you when you are to watch his motions. When you see men in great number moving closely together, like a flock of storks, you may conclude that they are hunting, and that you will soon revel in human blood.' 'But still,' said the young one, 'I would gladly know the reason of this mutual slaughter, I could never kill what I would not eat.' 'My child,' said the mother, 'this is a question which I cannot answer, though I am reckoned the most subtile bird of the mountain. When I was young, I used frequently to visit the aerie of an old vulture, who dwelt upon the Carpathian rocks; he had made many observations; he knew the places that afforded prey round his habitation, as far, in every direction, as the strongest wing can fly, between the rising and setting of the summer sun; he had fed, year after year, on the entrails of men. His opinion was, that men had only the appearance of animal life, being really vegetables with a power of motion; and that as the boughs of an oak are dashed together by the storm, that swine may fatten on the falling acorns, so men are, by some unaccountable power, driven one against another, till they lose their motion that vultures may be fed. Others think they have observed something of contrivance and policy among these mischievous beings; and those that hover more closely round them, pretend, that there is in every herd, one that gives directions to the rest, and seems to be more eminently delighted with wild carnage. What it is that entitles him to such pre-eminence we know not, he is seldom the biggest or the fleetest, but he shows by his eagerness and diligence, that he is, more than any of the others, a friend to the vultures.\*' "

As I have deviated into the paths of fiction, permit me, before I return to my grave subject, to relate the particulars of another fable. The writer

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\* The above constituted the original No. 22. of the *Idler*; but on the republication of that work in volumes, this paper was suppressed by the author, and another substituted in its stead.

of this fable, Dr. Franklin, a man of uncommon natural powers of mind, has represented a young angel as sent from heaven on a visit to this world of ours, and with him an older angel is sent, to accompany him as a guide, constantly to remain at his side. They had just arrived in the midst of the battle which was fought between Lord Rodney and the Count de Grasse. The young angel having heard the cries and the dying shrieks of the wounded, and being shocked at the different forms of misery and massacre which such a scene of carnage as a naval fight presented to his view, exclaimed to the angel that was his guide, "Oh, you have mistaken; I asked you to conduct me to the earth, but you have brought me to hell." "No," replied the other angel, "I have made no mistake; this is too surely earth, and not hell, for the devils never kill each other, but men do."

From these two fables, and the remarks of Erasmus, we may conclude, that these three great men, one a Catholic, another a Protestant, and the third a Deist, but all possessing superior powers of mind, were decidedly of opinion that the practice of war is directly at variance with just principles of natural religion. May we not infer that, in their view of war, it ought to be rejected by those who, "having not the law, are a law unto themselves;" that is, that it ought to be rejected on the principles of natural religion alone.

What is the duty respecting war, of those who are blessed with the light of revelation, will be considered in the following letters.

I remain, &c.

## LETTER XII.

THE PROFESSION OF ARMS INACCORDANT WITH  
THE DECALOGUE, AND THE PRECEPTS CON-  
TAINED IN THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

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“What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with thy God?”—*Micah* vi. 8.

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MY DEAR SIR,

THE paternal character of the Deity, of which some few heathen philosophers had attained, by reflection and the light of natural reason, faint and imperfect ideas, (as mentioned in my last Letter,) is in the Jewish laws portrayed with great force and beauty. “Have we not all *one Father*? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man with his brother\*?” This paternal character, so plainly described here and in many other places of the Old Testament, indicates that war and slaughter must be displeasing to such a benevolent parent; and though, to punish the idolatry and vices of the Canaanites, the Israelites were commanded to wage against them a war of destruction†, yet it seems very clear, admitting that war is not contradictory to

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\* Mal. ii. 10. See also Isa. lxiv. 8. Job xxxi. 13, 15. Ps. ciii. 13, &c. &c.

† Letter VIII. p. 152, 153.



the precepts contained in the Law and the Prophets, that the making it a profession or trade to live by, is altogether inaccordant with obedience to the moral precepts contained in the Old Testament. That I may not take up too much of your time, I shall confine the proofs I have to offer, chiefly to the motto I have selected, and to the decalogue.

To begin with the first commandment.—Though the soldier may not break this, or the second commandment, by falling down to a graven image, and worshipping it; yet is he not guilty of another kind of idolatry, which, in its effects, is frequently more to be deprecated? In the New Testament, the indulgence of certain passions, when they occupy the first place in our affections, is regarded as a species of idolatry. (See Col. iii. 5; Phil. iii. 19; 2 Cor. iv. 4.) The idolatry there mentioned, when compared with an insatiate appetite for military glory, is comparatively innoxious; it is confined to a limited sphere, and chiefly injures those who indulge in it; but military idolatry, if the appetite for military fame may be so designated, not only destroys the happiness of its votaries by unfitting them for social and domestic enjoyments, but it renders them incapable of making God the supreme object of their love and obedience, and carries with it misery, devastation, and death, among unoffending individuals, to an extent almost unlimited. Though pretending to be the protector, a military force has generally been found to be the destroyer of religion and liberty, the parents of happiness and moral

excellence. It may perhaps be doubted, whether, in what is called Christendom, the number of those who "worship the Father in spirit and in truth," is not less than those who worship Mars and Plutus with zeal and fidelity.

Though soldiers are not now called upon, like the subjects of Nebuchadnezzar, to fall down and worship an image, or, like the Romans, to worship their standards, yet military idolatry transfers to the creature that homage, that absolute obedience, which is alone due to the Creator. Whether a soldier may, at convenient times, be a worshiper of the true God, or of a graven image, it is to his commanding officer, or to his king, not to his God, that he is taught to look up for honour, for rank, for support: and "his servants we are to whom we obey."

As to taking God's sacred name in vain, though this practice is greatly diminished among both soldiers and sailors, and still more so among their officers, it yet prevails to no small extent.

As to keeping the sabbath-day holy, a soldier has often no choice whether he will so keep it or not; for it may be observed, that some of the most sanguinary battles on record have been fought on the day set apart for the worship of "the God of all peace." It is just, however, to observe, that in the military services of all European nations, divine service is performed, with due solemnity, when it does not interfere with the requirements of military duty.

Instead of honouring father and mother, a soldier

has a dispensation to burn and rob their habitation, or even to kill them, if they happen, by living on different sides of a mountain or river, to be the subjects of an unfriendly sovereign.

By the laws of our country, taking away the lives of others, with malice aforethought, constitutes the crime of murder : where this act is done premeditatedly and deliberately, a judge, or jury, will require no other proof of the malicious intention. Allowing, however, that this malicious intention, as it regards soldiers, has no existence,—that they go out to fight for glory ; then, does not the crime of murder apply to their employers ? What a weight of guilt does this seem to lay upon those sovereign princes, who for years not only premeditate taking away the lives of those whom they pronounce to be their enemies, but train up a portion of their subjects to the trade of taking away the lives of their brethren and fellow-men, and make the doing this skilfully, the high-road to wealth and honour. Like tigers, or if you please like Frederic, military despots “seize occasion ;” and when that is favourable, “they decide, make war, and leave the care of their justification to some laborious civilian\*.” If the employers are herein guilty, in the sight of a just God, can those whom they employ be regarded by him as innocent ?

As to adultery, though not regarded as a crime by Christian legislators, it is considered, under the Jewish laws, as one of the worst of crimes. With

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\* See Letter II. p. 54.



respect to it, the soldier is placed in a very peculiar and trying situation : the officer of justice tells him, *he ought not to be allowed to marry\*!!*

As to stealing, provided it is from an enemy, and by wholesale, (for petty thefts are by all allowed to be criminal,) it is held to be highly honourable. —And as to lying, and bearing false witness, it is held in like honour, if practised to deceive an enemy.

As to the tenth commandment, the soldier need not much trouble his head about it ; for, in some situations, he is not only permitted to covet, but to take by force, his neighbour's house, his wife, his man-servant, his maid-servant, his ox, his ass, and every thing that is his. And in too many instances may soldiers, in almost all countries, plead not only the license given to them, but the example set them by their employers, to break this commandment.

How melancholy the consideration, that sovereign princes, and these professing themselves to be the disciples of the humble Jesus, should so frequently, by their manifestoes or declarations of war, have suspended the decalogue, and in its place substituted the articles of war ; thus claiming for themselves, or their representatives, the unconditional obedience which is due to God alone.

Bishop Newton, Mr. Faber, and many intermediate commentators on the Prophecies, have taken much pains, and exhibited singular ingenuity, in discovering Antichrist among the different nations

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\* See Letter VI. p. 118.

and religious sects of Europe. I leave you to decide whether they have not bestowed much labour in exhibiting the mote in their brother's eye, which might have been usefully employed in removing the beam from their own. We may exultingly arraign His Holiness the Pope, and brand him as the man of sin and the son of perdition; we may clothe him in a scarlet robe, and call him the old lady of Babylon, and other hard names; but surely, of the sovereign prince, who publishes a war manifesto, and at one bold stroke annuls the ten commandments, it may supereminently be said, that "he exalteth himself above all (or every one) that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that, as God, he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." May not a close personification of this Antichrist be found in every belligerent state and kingdom, from the time of Constantine to the present? nor will the distinguishing characteristics of this enemy of Christianity be found less perfect, if we consult the prophecies of the Old Testament\*.

Any practice that is incompatible with obedience to the two tables of the law, we may naturally expect to find at variance with the morality inculcated by the inspired prophets. The motto I have selected, affords a striking instance of this: for when we consider the orders that a military man may be called upon to execute, it will appear next to a moral impossibility that he can "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God." To lay

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\* Isaiah xiv. 13, 14. Dan. vii.

waste the country of others, to burn or plunder their houses, or to take, sink, burn, or destroy their ships, are actions commonly imposed on military men. In executing these, must they not necessarily *do unjustly, despise mercy, and walk proudly before God?*

The conduct of David is often quoted as affording a sanction to war and the military profession : but the beautiful Psalms which are attributed to him, show that he loved, and that he “laboured for peace.” From the rejection of his prayer for building the temple, we may infer that God regards that man as less holy who sheds blood in war, than he who refrains from doing so. I might quote many parts of the Old Testament, to show the aversion of pious Jews to war ; but I will conclude the subject with a quotation from the venerable Jeremiah : “I am pained at my heart : I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.” How different the pathetic remarks of this good old man from the vauntings of some of our patriot divines ? What would he have said of the princes and the great men of Israel, had they, like the princes of Europe of the present day, made a trade of war, and received wages for protecting their own property and country ? The Jewish warriors did not fight for hire, and in their early wars appear to have had the divine sanction ; and when the end for which they engaged in war was accomplished, they returned to their peaceful occupations. Let Christian warriors do the same. Let them, if they will plead the practice of the Jews, as their excuse for engaging in



war, follow the example set them by the early Jewish warriors. When Christians shall do this, the time of universal peace will probably not be far distant.

Allowing, my dear Sir, that the profession of arms is not so directly repugnant to the decalogue, and the humane precepts that pervade the Old Testament, as to those contained in the Gospel, yet the prophetic writings bear testimony to a fact of the highest importance to Christians; viz. that under the reign of the Messiah, or under the Christian dispensation, wars were to cease throughout the world. The spread of Christianity, or "the knowledge of the Lord," was to be so universal as to "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea:" and the consequence of the dissemination of this knowledge was to be, that men would "beat their swords into ploughshares;" and "that they would learn war no more:" *i. e.* that they would retire from military employments, and give up studying the art or science of war.

The prophecies to which I have so often had occasion to refer, viz. Isaiah ii. 2—4; xi. 5—9; and Micah iv. 1—4; are not of doubtful interpretation, and they bear abundant testimony to the justice of the above remarks. They appear to afford an unanswerable argument, that war was to be, under the Christian dispensation, an unlawful thing. If the Christian religion is appointed by God to put an end to war, it may be presumed, *a priori*, that this religion must, directly or indirectly, condemn the practice of it. To affirm that Christianity sanctions

war, appears to be equivalent to affirming that it cannot be, as has been already remarked, the religion pointed out in these prophecies, which is "to cover the earth" and cause wars to cease.

Though the profession of arms is not directly prohibited by any positive command contained in either the Old or New Testament, yet its unlawfulness is more plainly deducible from the precepts of Christ, than from any other source.—My remaining Letters will be on this subject: and it is a subject of very high importance to nations and individuals; and this, whether we regard their interests in this world or in the next.

Before I quit this subject, permit me to remark, that though what I have said may not prove the utter unlawfulness of war under the Jewish dispensation, it will go far to show that no pious Jew could consistently engage in war as a trade to live by. The specific duties which one, so engaged, is bound to perform, appear directly at variance with doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God; and also to obedience to the two tables of the law. We may therefore infer, that the man who fulfils the former duties with fidelity, is incapacitated from discharging the latter.

I remain, &c.

## LETTER XIII.

THE PROFESSION OF ARMS, AND ALL WAR, IN-  
ACCORDANT WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTI-  
ANITY AND THE PRECEPTS TAUGHT BY CHRIST  
AND HIS APOSTLES.

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“Love is the fulfilling of the law.”—*Rom. xiii. 10.*

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MY DEAR SIR,

WHEN we consider the analogy between natural and revealed religion, as connected with the existence and attributes of the Deity, we must think it highly probable that war, if contrary to just notions of natural religion, must necessarily be at variance with the revealed will of God. We may also deem it highly probable that if war, or the profession of arms, be inaccordant with the decalogue and the precepts contained in the Law and the Prophets, that it must be equally inaccordant with the precepts contained in the Gospel : for its great Author came not to “destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil.”

When these things are taken in connection with the historical evidence, already adduced, that the early Christians, for nearly two centuries, thus received and acted upon the precepts delivered by



our Lord, we have evidence amounting to a high degree of probability (independently of the Christian revelation) that war and the profession of arms are inaccordant with Christianity. We acquire, at least, that kind of probable evidence on which men generally act in their worldly concerns, and which certainly ought to make reflecting persons pause before they engage in the military profession, if they really believe in a future state of existence, and balance the rewards and punishments attendant upon obedience or disobedience to the commands of God. The rewards are so great on the one hand, and the punishments so terrible on the other, that a degree of evidence amounting to only a bare probability that a man will forfeit the first and incur the last, ought to determine a man of prudence to embrace the safe side. But it is presumed that the evidence here to be offered, though not amounting to demonstration, is fully sufficient for our guidance. God not having given to Christians any positive commands concerning their engaging in national wars, they must search the Scriptures with diligence, sincerity and humility, and implicitly obey what, after due examination, they believe to be the will of God, or their duty. And, having no positive command, they must "walk by faith not by sight\*." If it were otherwise, there would be no room on this subject for the exercise of faith.

Considering the precepts and prophecies of the Old Testament in connection with those contained

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\* 2 Cor. v. 7.

in the Gospel, and regarding the former as introductory to the latter\*, we might naturally expect that they would be fitted to prepare the minds of men for those more perfect laws of righteousness and mercy, that were peculiarly to distinguish the kingdom of the Prince of Peace. This they are admirably calculated to effect.

It is an employment, no less pleasing than profitable, to consider the nature of this kingdom; the circumstances attending the advent of the appointed Saviour of mankind; his general conduct while on earth; and particularly the very peculiar precepts and doctrines which he taught: so *peculiar*, that those who adopted them were very aptly said to be *born again*, or to have put on the *new man*. To compare all these triumphs of Christianity with the predictions of the prophets, is both gratifying and useful to a pious mind.

If a comparison of the prophecies relating to our Lord, with their exact fulfilment, affords evidence of the truth of the Christian revelation, it also affords evidence, not less decisive, of the pacific nature of the Christian religion, and of the great difficulty, if not the impossibility, of men being, at the same time, warriors and humble followers of a crucified Saviour. Assuredly, it is highly satisfactory to the lover of peace, to find that the Prince of Peace and the Gospel of Peace are in perfect harmony with what the law and the prophets lead us to expect concerning them.

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\* Gal. iii. 24.

The great difference, and that which peculiarly distinguishes Christianity from the Jewish, and indeed from all other religions is, that it teaches universal philanthropy : not only the forgiveness of enemies, but the love of them. Instead of permitting us to retaliate injuries, and render ourselves redoubtable by our valour and military prowess, we are commanded to take up our Cross, and follow the example of our great Leader : like him, we are to be meek and lowly of heart ; like him, we are to submit to injuries, and leave to God that vengeance which belongs to him, and which, in due time HE will repay. But Christians, by their conduct, seem to reproach the Almighty for being too slow to punish : to act on the forbearing principle that God observes towards them, would be considered as pusillanimous, and degrading to national character.

It not having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the world to give to individual Christians any positive precepts or injunctions concerning the lawfulness of their engaging in national wars, the only evidence of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of their being parties in them, is circumstantial or probable evidence ; a species of evidence, in many cases, no less to be relied on than direct evidence, and on which the truth of Christianity itself very much depends.

Speaking of this kind of evidence, Bishop Butler, in the Introduction to his *Analogy of Religion*, says :

“ Probable evidence is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this,—that it admits of degrees ; and of all variety of them, from the highest moral certainty, to the very lowest presumption. We cannot indeed say a thing is pro-



bably true upon one very slight presumption for it ; because, as there may be probabilities on both sides of a question, there may be some against it : and though there be not, yet a slight presumption does not beget that degree of conviction, which is implied in saying a thing is probably true. But that the slightest presumption is of the nature of a probability, appears from hence ; that such a low presumption, often repeated, will amount even to moral certainty\*.”

The evidence of the unlawfulness of war is of the nature here mentioned : and if it can be shown that war is destructive of every virtue which the Gospel inculcates, and that it interferes with obedience to the precepts given us by Christ for our guidance, Christians may presume that they cannot innocently engage in it. This it will be my endeavour to show in the following Letters. But before I proceed to do this, I will offer a few remarks arising out of the parental character of God, as affording probable evidence that war must be displeasing to him as the universal parent of all the nations of the earth.

Though some highly gifted men among the heathens had confused notions concerning this parental character of the Deity, yet this knowledge was not only confined to a few, but with them was mixed up with opinions derogatory to the character of a parent. This character of God, though revealed in the Jewish Scriptures, was imperfectly displayed ; for the Jews supposed that they alone were the favoured children of God, and they regarded other

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\* See Analogy of Religion, &c. Introduction, p. 1.

nations as aliens, and out of the pale of his peculiar protection; and their hopes and views were not extended beyond the present state of existence. The Gospel alone teaches the great and glorious truth, that one God has not only created all men, but that his fatherly care will be extended over all his offspring *beyond the grave*. In the doctrine of the Resurrection from the dead, we behold the love of our Heavenly Father as far transcending that of an earthly parent, as eternity does the short period of human life. This ought to be to Christians a superior motive to obedience and purity of conduct.

The parental character of the Deity shines forth in every page of the New Testament: it is to our Father that we are to pray and to render thanks\*; and unless we imagine our Heavenly Father to be less concerned for the welfare and happiness of mankind than an earthly parent is for his offspring, we cannot reasonably suppose that mankind, (who are all of the family of one parent,) whilst slaughtering each other, can be acting agreeably to the plans of the divine government, otherwise than as a corrective or punishment for crime. That the Great Parent of all has implanted in human parents feelings of affection for their offspring—that he has extended these feelings even to irrational animals,—affords a strong presumption that he entertains the feelings of a Father for all. And if an earthly parent feel displeasure with his children for their want of kindness and brotherly affection—we may, from

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\* Matt. vi. 9.

analogy, conclude that our Heavenly Father, who "is Love and dwelleth in love," must feel displeasure when his children, instead of *dwelling in love*, slaughter each other without the least remorse. It is the constant theme of our Saviour's exhortations to his disciples, that they should "love one another." Every precept that he has given us has a direct tendency in this way to produce "peace on earth."

—As to war among Christians, it seems not merely a disregard to one or two particular precepts, but a dissolution of all the laws and precepts that Christ has given to mankind. To say that war among Christians is lawful, or, in other words, to maintain that "It is lawful for Christian men at the commandment of the magistrate to wear weapons, and to serve in war," seems, at the same time, to be an interference with the prerogative of our Great Law-giver, a denial of the paternal character of God, and a declaration to the world that all men are not brethren, nor children of the same common parent. For if no earthly parent can be imagined so unnatural as to sanction his children to slaughter each other, we cannot surely think so degradingly of our Heavenly Father, "the God of all mercies," as to believe that he is less humane and less benevolent than the earthly parent.—It is, my dear Sir, for you, and every minister of the church of which you are a member, duly to consider whether, in subscribing to this dogma, you are promoting the interests of Jesus Christ or of Antichrist. If upon due examination you find you have been in error, you ought, though thrones and mitres should interfere, to re-



trace your steps : you ought to “cry aloud and spare not.” What you find in the sacred pages of revelation—“what you hear in the ear, you ought to proclaim on the house-tops.”

If we examine or analyse the nature and tendency of the leading duties enjoined by our holy religion, we shall find that a state of warfare, or the profession of arms, entirely undermines or subverts the greater part of them, rendering obedience to them impossible. The first great duty of this kind enjoined by our Saviour which I propose here to notice, is our taking up our Cross and following Christ. As the doing this may be considered as a summary of the duties of a Christian, permit me to make a few remarks on this very interesting topic.

We read much, not only in the Christian Scriptures, but in the writings of Christians of all periods, concerning the Cross of Christ. Ever since the time of Constantine, who impiously displayed it as a military standard, the exhibiting the figure of a cross has been superstitiously considered by some as a security from danger and disease, and even from death. Like the phylacteries of the Jews, and with as much consistency, this symbol has been regarded as a mark of inward purity and holiness. Though these fopperies of religion are now nearly banished from a large portion of what is called Christendom, yet the ministers of Christ very properly still maintain the necessity of Christians taking up their Cross, and following their divine Master.

To take up the Cross and follow Christ, no doubt includes (along with other duties) a renunciation of

all the evil passions to which, by nature or habit, we are subject,—to crucify the flesh with the lusts thereof. Among these we may certainly reckon pride, covetousness, and revenge. In subjugating these, I think you will allow that we imitate Christ, or take up our Cross and follow him, in a part of our duty perhaps the most difficult of attainment. A tame submission to injuries or insults was considered, not only by the Greeks and Romans but also by the Jews, as a mark of cowardice ; and, as such, deserving of contempt : nor is it regarded in any other light by the generality of Christians. Among these, the heroic, though the very reverse of the Christian character, is esteemed and patronized. Whatever difference of opinion there may be concerning the extent of the duties implied in taking up our Cross and following Christ, I run no risk in affirming, that no one can be said to comply with this injunction, who does not practise the forgiveness of injuries and insults,—leaving the avenging of them to the great Lord of heaven and earth. But soldiers and their employers take vengeance into their own hands ; and instead of taking up the Cross, take up the musket. Should a soldier (in any sense that can be rationally put upon this figurative expression) take up his Cross, he must, for military purposes, become useless ; for he is wanted, if not to avenge his own wrongs, to avenge those of others.

If a soldier cannot take up his Cross and follow his Lord, neither can he cultivate that Charity, or Love, which his religion enjoins as of primary im-

portance. The excellences of this virtue are ably summed up by Dr. Paley \*; but they are still more forcibly delineated by St. Paul, when he says, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up: doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: Beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." This is not only the peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of our holy religion and its divine Founder, but it is the character of God himself. GOD IS LOVE. Of his *love* to mankind, daily and hourly experienced by us, he has given us a capacity of judging, and we are to make this love of God the standard of our love to our fellow-creatures; towards them we are, if we expect to receive mercy, to be "merciful, as our Father also is merciful."

In our holy religion, *Love*—love to God and to our fellow-creatures, may be regarded as a leading principle, without which other religious attainments may be held as of little value: if we have not charity, or love, we are "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." If we consider the practice of this divine virtue as a cause,—and it is perhaps impossible to imagine a more powerful one, whether it be to procure friends or conciliate enemies,—we have its effects described beforehand, in those cheering prophecies to which I have so repeatedly alluded.

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\* See an extract from the *Christian Evidences*, in Letter III. pp. 62, 63.



Let us, my dear Sir, examine how far the exercise of this first of Christian graces is practicable to a warrior by profession ; for if it cannot be practised in the military profession, we may conclude that that profession is inaccordant with Christianity.

First : “ Charity suffereth long, and is kind.” Can this be applied to the soldier ? His duty is to avenge insults and injuries, and to do it quickly : if offered to his country, to maintain her honour ; —if to himself, to maintain unsullied his own reputation. In either case, to suffer long and be kind, would subject the soldier, whether private or officer, to utter contempt and derision. Should it be said that this exercise of charity is only applicable to individuals in their private capacities, I ask to be informed on what authority this is advanced : the Christian Scriptures and the precepts of Christ, which teach long-suffering and kindness to others, give no sanction to such a restriction. The greatest prince, if professing Christianity, is, notwithstanding his high station, an *individual* Christian, and answerable, as well as his meanest subject, at the awful tribunal of God\* ; and if not permitted to avenge his own wrongs, we must infer that he cannot, innocently, employ others to avenge him. Or if we, as individual Christians, are forbidden to avenge our own wrongs, and commanded to suffer long, and be kind,—can we with consistency, can we with innocence, avenge the wrongs of another, either gratuitously or for wages ?

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\* Job xxxiv. 19.

Secondly: "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up: doth not behave itself unseemly." Though military men of education or discretion may not indulge in that kind of foolish boasting which is common with their inferiors, yet it is essential to the warlike or heroic spirit to be puffed up, and to look down on others. Every man in command is desirous to promote a vaunting spirit, and to persuade those under him, that four of them are more than equal to six of their enemies. To tell them that all men are brethren, that they must love their enemies, as Christ has commanded, would be considered as little short of mutiny or high treason.

Thirdly: "Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." This is much to the same purport as to say, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind;" and it is alike inapplicable to the military character. The soldier of a meek and forgiving temper, who should, as a Christian, be ready to forgive injuries and insults, whether offered to himself or his superiors, though an ornament to his Christian profession, would soon be discarded from his military one. In whatever way we consider the heroic spirit, which is essential to him who embraces the profession of arms, it appears to be in direct opposition to the practice of this divine virtue, which is emphatically said to be the fulfilling of the law. For a soldier to practise charity, this first of Christian graces, and at the same time faithfully obey his superiors, seems to be as impossible as it is for him to serve two masters, whose commands are in direct

opposition ; as impossible, if I may be permitted the comparison, as for him to serve God and mammon.

If the life of a soldier is opposed to the practice of charity, it is also opposed to obedience to the two great commandments. When asked which was the first and great commandment, our Lord replied, in the very words of Moses : “ Hear, O Israel ; the Lord our God is one Lord : and Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like, namely this : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” For a soldier—who is not permitted to act upon religious scruples, and whose first duty it is to obey his commanding officer—to talk of loving God with all his heart, seems to be inconsistent with sincerity towards that God, who “ knoweth the secrets of all hearts.” The soldier may, from long and deeply rooted prejudices, sanctioned by general opinion, suppose, that in obeying his superiors he is fulfilling this first of all commandments. But it is his duty, as much as it is the duty of a Christian minister, to consult his Bible, and learn from it the duties imposed upon him by his Christian profession ; and having ascertained these, he is bound to obey them. No human authority can excuse, or palliate his disobedience ; he must take up his Cross, and persevere in the straight narrow path pointed out to him ; and if necessary, he must give up friends, fortune, and even life itself,



rather than compromise his duty to God. This did the early Christians, as has been already shown; (See Letter IX and X) rather than engage in war.

For a soldier to fulfil the second great commandment,—or to love his neighbour as himself,—is as impossible as for him to love God with *all* his heart. Were warriors by profession to consider all human beings not only as their neighbours, but as brethren, and to treat them as such, it would be impossible for them to remain members of a profession which virtually annihilates this sacred duty. For how can a man, who for wages engages to shoot his neighbour, be supposed capable of loving him as he loves himself, or to love him at all?

Though what I have said may convince impartial persons that the practice of war, in any shape, is irreconcilable with the spirit and fundamental precepts of the Christian religion, yet, so strong are the prejudices on this subject, and so unconquerable the apathy to discuss it, even by persons of serious and religious habits, that I hope I may be permitted to offer a further proof of the unlawfulness of war.

I may, I think, be allowed to take it for granted, that you will readily admit that no person professing Christianity ought to engage in any act, or follow any profession, that may disqualify him from offering up, with piety and sincerity, the petitions to the Deity contained in that divine summary of prayer taught by our great Lord and Master. From the following extract from Erasmus; he appears to be decidedly of opinion that a soldier is placed in this situation.

After mentioning the absurdity of Christians using the Cross as a military standard, and the impiety of divine service being performed by adverse armies, he adds :

“ Let us now imagine we hear a soldier among these fighting Christians saying the Lord’s Prayer.—‘ OUR FATHER,’ says he. O hardened wretch ! can you call him *Father*, when you are just going to cut your brother’s throat?—‘ *Hallowed be thy name.*’ How can the name of God be more impiously unhallowed, than by mutual, bloody murder among you, his sons ?—‘ *Thy kingdom come.* Do you pray for the coming of his kingdom, while you are endeavouring to establish an earthly despotism, by the shedding of the blood of God’s sons and subjects ?—‘ *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*’ His will in heaven is for *peace*, but you are meditating *war*.—Dare *you* say to your Father in heaven, ‘ *Give us this day our daily bread,*’ when you are going the next minute to burn your *brother’s* corn-fields ; and had rather lose the benefit of them yourself, than suffer him to enjoy them unmolested ?—With what face can you say, ‘ *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ;*’ when, so far from forgiving your brother, you are going, with all the haste you can, to murder him in cold blood, for an alleged trespass, which after all, is but imaginary ?—Do you presume to deprecate the danger of ‘ *temptation,*’ who, not without danger to yourself, are doing all you can to force your brother into danger ?—Do you deserve to be preserved ‘ *from evil,*’ that is from the evil being, to whose influence you submit yourself, and by whose spirit you are guided, in contriving the greatest possible evil to your brother ?”

Many similar arguments might be adduced ; but I trust, my dear Sir, I have fully shown that the profession of arms, and all war, offensive or de-

fensive, are directly opposed to the spirit of Christianity, and therefore that it is, at least, highly probable that a Christian cannot engage in it without becoming obnoxious to the displeasure of God.

Being desirous to meet every objection to the principles I have advocated, I propose, in my subsequent Letters, to examine some other arguments advanced in favour of *defensive* war, particularly those of Mr. Sheppard, in a work entitled, *An Inquiry on the Duty of Christians with respect to War*,\* which I recommend to your impartial perusal.

I remain, &c.

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\* Published by T. Hammond, Paternoster-Row, London.



## LETTER XIV.

### THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*Remarks on a work entitled "An Inquiry on the Duty of Christians with respect to War, by J. SHEPPARD."*

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"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."—  
2 Pet. i. 19.

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MY DEAR SIR,

THE arguments of Mr. Sheppard, alluded to in my last Letter, are founded on the presumption that some of the precepts delivered by Christ, particularly some of those delivered by him in his Sermon on the Mount, do not strictly apply to Christians of the present day, but are to be received, with certain limitations and restrictions, sanctioning Christians to use military force, or violence, in defending themselves or others; and consequently, authorising *defensive* warfare.

I have read this work of Mr. Sheppard with attention and interest, and also with pleasure. This pleasure has arisen, in no small degree, from its tendency to call attention to a subject which has been little investigated by men of learning and research, though connected with the best interests of the

world : this pleasure has been further increased, by finding that the views of Mr. S. are very similar to those I entertained some years ago, particularly on the unlawfulness of men engaging in *unlimited* military service. In regard to *defensive* war, I feel the more fully convinced, after having carefully examined the arguments of Mr. S., that the Christian ought to refrain from it, and leave retributive justice in the hands of the Almighty \*. The perusal of the *Inquiry* has, indeed, served to convince me that, on the subject of war, there is no half-way house called *defensive* war ; and that the Christian can find no rest for the sole of his foot, short of abandoning war altogether, and leaving vengeance to the Lord, who will in due time repay it.

It is not my intention to examine all the grounds on which the author of the *Inquiry* pronounces that the principle of the Peace Societies requires limitation ; neither do I propose to notice the plans of *limited* service recommended by Mr. S. Suffice it to say, that I think the political evils arising out of them, would by no means be less than those attending the present military system. But Mr. S. having assumed, for reasons which he has stated, that some particular precepts of our Lord, bearing directly on the subject of war, are to be received in a limited sense, or that they apply exclusively to the apostolic age ; it will be my aim in the following Letters to show that he is in error, and that his conclusions are unauthorised.

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\* Rom. xii. 19.

Instead of examining, in order, the different arguments brought forward by Mr. S., I shall merely quote some of the Christian precepts referred to by him, on which the argument chiefly rests, and give what I consider their true meaning and their probable application, not to the early Christians only, but to Christians in all ages. If these are found to be at variance with the assumptions of Mr. S., it will follow that one of us must necessarily be in error, and it will be left to the searcher after truth to examine the arguments on both sides, and decide for himself. I am aware that it is a subject on which wise and good men have differed ; and so far from entering upon it with confidence, it is with diffidence I approach it. My diffidence, however, arises not from any fear of a want of Scriptural evidence on the subject, but from an apprehension that I may want ability to place this evidence in its just and proper light, so as to produce that conviction upon others which it is calculated to convey.

The precepts which most directly apply to the question on which I am now at issue with Mr. S., are contained in the last eleven verses of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. A paraphrase of these appears to me the best way of conveying what I believe to be their meaning. Though there may appear to be some degree of presumption in my offering a paraphrase to you, I cannot doubt but it will be received and read with candour. Should I stray from the path of correct interpretation, I lay myself open to your correction, and shall thankfully receive it from you, or from any lover of truth.



If we read the whole of the beautiful chapter alluded to, (Matt. v.) with attention ; we shall find in it, after making due allowance for the oriental and hyperbolical style of writing, the most perfect consistency and harmony. In the beginning of it, our Lord pronounces certain beatitudes as the unavoidable result of the practice of particular virtues. The latter part of the chapter, which is in close connection with the beginning, gives us very plain directions for the attainment of those particular virtues there recommended ; and the last four verses are explanatory, and contain plain and positive rules for our guidance in obeying the preceding precepts. In the last verse, these rules are summed up in one : “ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect :” *i. e.* in the practice of those benevolent virtues which our Lord had just mentioned ; for it is in these only that men are capable of attaining any faint resemblance of their merciful Creator. That this is the true meaning, we may gather from the parallel place in St. Luke’s Gospel, (Luke vi. 36,) who has it. “ Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful.” This, in every instance to which it is applicable, appears to be a plain, intelligible, practicable rule ; a rule not intended exclusively for the use of the Apostles and their first converts, but for the followers of Christ in all ages, whether as individuals, or united in nations ; a rule equally imperative on the prince on the throne, and on the lowest of his subjects, to the end of time. All these may and ought to endeavour to be merciful to others, as God is merciful to them.

## PARAPHRASE.

38. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth :

38. When you are injured or insulted, instead of showing resentment, or demanding satisfaction ; or instead of returning a blow for a blow, or exacting as your law allows you, "an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth,"—you are to suffer with patience. This may be considered as meanness and cowardice by men of the world ; but for your consolation, remember what I have just told you, that "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God."

39. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

39. Instead, therefore, of avenging yourselves, I say unto you, *That ye resist not evil :* but (as the proverb\* says) *whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.* Your enemies may revile you for such pusillanimous conduct ; but remember for your comfort, that "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." You, my apostles, in particular, will have severe trials of your patience to endure ; but I say these things in the presence of this assembled multitude, in order that it may be understood by my followers in all future ages, that whenever they feel an inclination to return evil for evil, they may not only remember my command and example, but may also call to mind their own offences towards God ; and make his forbearance towards them, the standard of their forgiveness against an offending brother ; that "they may be merciful, even as their Father is merciful."

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\* See Doddridge's *Family Expositor* in loco.

40. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

40. If you adopt this truly divine principle, of imitating the forbearance and long-suffering of God towards sinful men, you will not only be averse to the use of force, but also to all strife and litigation; so that if a man should sue you at the law, you will quietly submit to a small loss, and suffer yourselves to be defrauded, rather than go to law with him.

41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go with him a mile, go with him twain.

41. And whosoever shall ask of you a small favour, grant it, and even more than is asked. For example, if a man shall urge you to go with him a mile, go with him twain.

42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

42. Give to him that asketh, according to your ability and his necessity, not weighing his demerits; for this is the merciful rule by which your compassionate Father in heaven acts towards ungrateful and wicked men in this world.

43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

43. As you may suppose, from what I have just told you concerning the not resisting of evil, that you are only called upon to exercise forbearance towards those of your own nation in trifling matters;—such as if a man should strike you on the right cheek; or sue you at the law, to take away your coat; or compel you to go with him a mile:

44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

44. I, therefore, say unto you, That it is your positive duty, if you will indeed be my disciples, to love your enemies, whether national or individual, by doing them all the good in your power, and praying for them. You are even to act thus towards the Samaritans, whom ye have been accustomed to hate and despise.



45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

45. This is the true way for you to become my disciples, and the children of your Father who is in heaven. In your intercourse with each other, when you are disposed to act with severity, consider the lenity of God towards yourselves; and endeavour, not only to the good, but also to the evil, to be merciful, as he is merciful.

46. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

46. By thus acting, you imitate the conduct of your Father who is in heaven, and will have the high honour of being regarded as his children. But in merely loving them that love you, you can hope for no reward, for even the publicans and irreligious men act on this principle :

47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what reward have ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

47. They salute their brethren, and are kind to those from whom they receive kindness; but the children of God are not thus to confine their benevolence. Though their ability to do good may be small, all have it in their power to refrain from offering injury or insult to others; all may pray for their enemies, and return blessing for cursing.

48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

48. All of you have it in your power, however imperfectly, to imitate the perfections of God, by being merciful to others, even as God is merciful to you. As the benevolence of God extends to all nations, and to people of all languages and colours, so also ought yours to be, and not confined to your own nation or kindred; for the inhabitants of the world are all brethren, children of the same universal parent. It is therefore your duty to be kind and mer-

ciful to all; and for your encouragement I have already told you, that "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

In the words of Dr. Paley, I may with justice observe, "This is no common-place morality. It is very original. It shows at least, that no two things can be more different than the heroic and the Christian character." This originality will, I think, cease, if we admit the limitation proposed by Mr. Sheppard, to the precept "Resist not evil;" which limitation I now proceed to examine.

After some remarks on Scripture language, and assigning his reasons why some of the precepts of Christ are to be exclusively applied to the apostolical age, and others to be received with certain limitations, (such as John vi. 27, Luke xiv. 33, and some others,) he says, speaking of the precept "Resist not evil," "We might consider it as *abbreviative*, and introduce the following limitation: 'Resist not evil' (from the impulse of any bad passion, as revenge or pride). This is not a more considerable limitation than must be annexed to the following precept, (Luke xii.) 'Seek not what ye shall eat, nor what ye shall drink' (with an undue and distrustful anxiety). Limitations must at least be tacitly understood by us in these and several before-cited passages, as well as in others which have not been adduced; nor do I perceive that any sound reason can be offered, why none should be admitted of this particular case."—At p. 31, speaking of the same precept, and of its application to the doctrine of

non-resistance, Mr. S. says: "Thus, I think, we have found, that the interpretation contended for, rests upon no general reason, but is *insulated* and arbitrary. For so it must be accounted, till a solid reason be given for it, inapplicable to those precepts which its supporters join us in interpreting differently, or else till a solid reason be given for the different interpretation of those other precepts inapplicable to this."

I agree with Mr. S., that unless a solid reason to the contrary can be given, the precept in question might be received with the limitation he proposes. But I consider this precept, and the precepts contained in the five following verses, in one particular, as *insulated* precepts; *i. e.* there are *special rules* given for understanding and applying them; and these rules are contained in the last four verses of the chapter, which are explanatory, and the whole is summed up in the comprehensive command "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It is for the purpose of showing and applying this, that I have given the preceding paraphrase.

To try the limitation proposed by Mr. S. by the above rules,—rules laid down by our Saviour himself,—will, I think, demonstrate the inadmissibility of Mr. S.'s hypothesis. For how strange would it appear to say, "Resist not evil" *from the impulse of any bad passion, as revenge or pride*, in order that you may show yourselves to "be merciful, as your Father also is merciful." It is certain that God cannot resist evil from the impulse of any bad pas-



sion, for such passions dwell not with him : and no part of our duty is more explicitly shown, than that the mercy and forbearance of God ought, in all cases to which it can be applied, to be made the standard of our conduct towards our fellow-creatures. Again : if we consider the precept “ Resist not evil ” in connection with what immediately follows in the same and the following verses, we may consider the latter as explanatory of the former, and affording another *rule* for interpreting this precept. If we do this, we shall find it impossible to admit the limitation of Mr. S. Its admission would neutralize, or destroy, the precept itself ; for how inconsistent it would be to say “ Resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek,” smite him again, —only do not act “ from the impulse of any bad passion, as revenge or pride.” Such a limitation, it is evident, destroys the meaning and spirit of the precept, and runs counter to other plain commands of our Lord. It makes the gate wide and way broad that leads to eternal life, and the warrior may be admitted to travel it, as well as the humble and self-denying Christian. It would be equally inconsistent to say “ Resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek,” smite him again, —to show that you love your enemies, that you “ bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.”

The hypothesis of Mr. S., so far from squaring with the divine rules given us by our Saviour for understanding and applying this precept (or summary of many precepts), seems at variance with the spirit

and letter of his commands : we may therefore, I think, safely reject the limitation which he has proposed. Should it be asked to what length we are to carry this principle of non-resistance,—it is sufficient, for the present purpose, to answer, that we must unavoidably break the rule here laid down, if we resist so far as to take away or endanger the life of our brother ; consequently, it virtually prohibits the profession of arms.

Should it be said that the precept “Resist not evil” is applicable only to minor injuries and insults offered by one individual to another, and that this is to be inferred from the verses immediately following ; and should it be granted that this was our Lord’s meaning,—permit me to ask you, what would be the consequence, if all the youth in a nation, from the heir to the throne down to the peasant, were to be brought up under the impression, that it is not only directly contrary to their Christian profession, but also dishonourable to them as Christians, to resent minor injuries or insults ? Would not the consequence be, that the next generation would become a race of men substantially different from the present ; and that there would not be found a man to unsheathe the sword in anger ? The spirit of litigation would also cease, and our high court of chancery, like the famed temple of Janus, would be shut : our judges would enjoy their situations as sinecures ; and our lawyers, instead of being annoyed by vexatious quarrels, would have the happiness of seeing mankind living in harmony and security. This is not vain declamation. It is in strict

accordance with hopes founded on rational grounds, on the spread of Christian principles and religious education ; and above all, the cheering spirit of prophecy assures the realization of these delightful hopes.

As a Christian minister, you must admit that the highest monarch, if he is a believer in the Christian revelation, is, as an *individual*, equally accountable for all his actions, with the most obscure person ; for “ God accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor\*.” So far, indeed, from high station exempting men from obedience to the great King of kings, it appears to augment their responsibility ; for they are to be regarded as “ God’s ministers.” If, therefore, a king has not permission, as an individual, to exercise vengeance on foreign enemies, it seems anomalous to suppose that he should possess the power of deputing it to others. This would involve the absurdity and impiety, that nations or societies of Christians may lawfully do that, which to each individual is unlawful. This, as far as sovereigns and nations are concerned, appears to render the morality of the Gospel an inanity†. The splendour of sovereigns, of nations, or of armies, may throw a mist over our mental vision, and render us blind to the most pal-

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\* Job xxxiv. 19.

† Dr. Paley says : “ It may be necessary for individuals to unite their force, and, for this end, to resign themselves to the direction of one common will ; and yet it may be true, that that will is often actuated by criminal motives, and often determined by destructive purposes.”—See Letter VIII.

If this does not mean that subjects may occasionally, or when it is



pable truths; but if we apply the principle alluded to, to common life, its evils will be apparent. Suppose, for instance, that the proprietors of two rival manufactories, each employing a thousand men, should contend, that though, as individual Christians, they were not permitted to resist or resent injuries or insults, yet that they might when united with those under them, as a body of men, take up the cause of vengeance. The manufacturer, it is true, can only bring his thousand men into action; which, on the principles of Bishop Porteus, places him on a kind of neutral ground between a villain and a hero\*. It seems to place him in about the same situation as the ancient English barons: but instead of regarding him as a half hero, the laws of any country would now consign both him and his followers to the gallows. In what would he be more criminal than the whole hero?

Mr. S., I anticipate, will say that there is no analogy between the hero and the manufacturer; the one having a legal tribunal to afford him redress, the other none. The answer to this specious reasoning is, that the highest prince, if a Christian, as well as the lowest manufacturer, is bound by those Scriptures, which are given to all "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in all righteousness; that

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expedient to do so, obey men rather than God, it appears to have no intelligible meaning. Ought not the conscientious Christian to say to the defenders of such principles, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united."

\* ——— "One murder made a villain,

Millions a hero."

the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." All agree that it is a crime for an individual to take away the life of another; and proof is wanting from the Christian Scriptures, much stronger than any brought forward by Mr. S., that a Christian can innocently kill his brother in battle.

I trust, my dear Sir, I have shown that the principle on which Mr. S. limits the application of certain precepts delivered by our Lord, particularly that of "Resist not evil," is founded in error. I will now endeavour to show that the passage he has quoted from the Epistle to the Romans, (chap. xiii. 1—7,) is inapplicable to the purpose for which he has quoted it; viz. to show, that because men are commanded to be subject to, or *submissive* to the civil magistrate, it is their duty to render *active* obedience. In doing this, I shall pursue the plan I have already observed, viz. by giving, in a paraphrase, what I take to be the true meaning of the passage, leaving the reader to decide for himself.

In the concluding part of chapter xii. the Apostle (though not in the same words, yet in substance) enforces the practice of the very precepts which I have already quoted in this Letter: and he concludes with "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

After this excellent advice to the Roman converts for their conduct in their intercourse with each other, he proceeds to give them directions for their behaviour towards their rulers; who, it is to be borne in mind, were pagans; and Nero, their reigning emperor.

## PARAPHRASE.

### CHAP. XIII.

1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.
1. It is particularly the duty of the followers of Christ to be subject to men in authority; for all magistrates, whether good or bad, holding their offices by the permission of God, may be said to be ordained by him. But, in rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, they must remember to render unto God the things that are God's.
2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.
2. Though placed under the dominion of a pagan; a man, also, of a sanguinary disposition, and an enemy to our religion; yet, you are still to bear in mind, that if you resist his power you resist the ordinance of God; and they who resist will, at the same time, incur the divine displeasure, and receive to themselves that legal condemnation and punishment which the magistrate has the power to inflict.
3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil, Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power; do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same;
3. For rulers are not a terror to subjects of quiet and inoffensive habits, but only to those of a contrary disposition. If, therefore, you live peaceably and quietly, and pay the accustomed tributes,—so far from having cause to be afraid of your rulers, you may hope to obtain their praise, as well as their protection.



4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

4. All rulers, though they may be wicked men, are still to be regarded by you as the ministers of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, by refusing to render to them the honour and obedience to which they are entitled, from all who live under their protection, you will then have just cause to be afraid, and you will find that they have ample power to punish you, and that they bear not the sword in vain. I repeat it to you, that you must, by all means, regard them as the ministers of God, and as revengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

5. And you will find the passive submission I recommend, not only the best means of preserving you from the penalties of the law, but it will also secure to you the high satisfaction arising from the conscientious discharge of your duty. It will be well-pleasing in the sight of God.

6. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

6. Wherefore, remembering that you are continually receiving protection from your rulers, against the aggressions of all enemies, foreign or domestic, you must cheerfully pay the accustomed tribute, as our Lord himself did.

7. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

7. And you must not only pay the tribute-money, but you must render unto all men in power their just dues; custom to whom custom is due; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

I can see nothing in the above passage, which is applicable to the purpose for which Mr. S. has quoted it; viz. to show that Christians might engage in military service. To this service the words of St. Paul have no reference. It is *passive submission*, not *active obedience*, that St. Paul enforces; for we may rest assured that he would never have sanctioned the Christian converts, to whom he writes, to fight under the banners of Nero.

Mr. S. appears to disapprove of the doctrine of non-resistance; but if we begin at the 14th verse of the preceding chapter,—which to understand the Apostle's meaning we ought to do,—it was scarcely possible for him to have produced any part of Scripture more favourable to the establishment of this doctrine, than the passage just quoted, if the paraphrase given of it be admissible.

At page 180, Mr. S. says “that the non-resistance of the Friends, insures a certain kind of *passive obedience*, not displeasing to the politicians in question.” So far from this being the case, I apprehend the principle of non-resistance, as understood by the Society of Friends, and generally received by the Peace Societies, to be closely connected, not with the doctrine of *passive obedience*, but with that of *passive resistance*, if I may use the term. It was by acting upon this principle, which appears to have been the very principle on which our Saviour and his Apostles acted, that the early Christians opposed war. For this, they were severely censured by Celsus, who tells them “that if the rest of the empire were of their opinion, it would soon be overrun by the

barbarians." (See Letter IX. page 176.) The Christians were, at the time of Celsus, living under the protection of the Roman government, and military force was then essential for their defence, in common with the defence of other Roman subjects; and it appears to be on the very principle on which Celsus condemns the early Christians, that Mr. S. now censures the Peace Societies. If these censures are just, they apply not only to these Societies, but also to the early Christians, and to the Christian Fathers; to men for whose opinions Mr. S., I doubt not, entertains a very high respect. I am almost led to suppose that Mr. S. considers the doctrines of non-resistance and passive obedience in the same *disgraceful* and *degrading* light; but certainly they are essentially different doctrines.

The principle of passive or moral resistance, so far from being pleasing to politicians, would, if generally acted upon, be more fatal to the schemes of ambitious princes and statesmen, than the opposition of physical force; for, whenever the religious principle that dictates it shall become general, these men will want the tools with which they have hitherto worked. And thus Christianity will effect, without bloodshed, what the experience of ages has shown that the sword has never yet been able to accomplish. This is not a visionary case; for we have it on indubitable authority, that hereafter men will beat their swords into ploughshares, and also that they will dwell in safety.

The non-resistance of evil, which Mr. S. connects with the degrading doctrine of passive obedience,



appears to be not only one of the *peculiar* doctrines of the Gospel, but one of its grand and distinguishing characteristics. It seems an essential part of every Christian grace and virtue. It identifies itself with the forgiveness of injuries ; it seems to be the first-born of charity,—it “suffereth long and is kind ; it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly ; beareth all things, endureth all things ;” and, like its parent, may be said to be “the bond of perfectness.” It would seem that the man who does not practise this virtue, or who unduly limits its bounds, cannot possess *charity*, and, therefore, is “as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” There can hardly be two principles of action more discordant than those of non-resistance and passive obedience. The former attaches itself to every thing that is great and excellent ; the latter to what is mean and grovelling. The former prohibits the shedding of human blood ; the latter permits us to shed it in torrents. The former is consistent with liberty, civil and religious ; the latter is the handmaid of slavery and moral degradation. The former teaches us to obey God rather than man ; the latter to obey man rather than God. If this great, this *original* doctrine of the Gospel is now despised and rejected of men, so also was the divine Teacher who promulgated it.

After repeating the precept “Resist not evil,” and what immediately follows, and strongly marking the difference between the heroic and Christian character (see Preface), Dr. Paley concludes in the words of *Soame Jennings* :

I. "If this (*the Christian*) disposition were universal, the case is clear; the world would be a society of friends. Whereas, if the other disposition were universal, it would produce a scene of universal contention. The world could not hold a generation of such men."

II. "If, what is the fact, the disposition be partial; if a few be actuated by it, amongst a multitude who are not;—in whatever degree it does prevail, in the same proportion it prevents, allays, and terminates quarrels, the great disturbers of human happiness, and the great sources of human misery, so far as man's happiness and misery depend upon man. Without this disposition, enmities must not only be frequent, but, once begun, must be eternal; for each retaliation being a fresh injury, and, consequently, requiring a fresh *satisfaction*, no period can be assigned to the reciprocation of affronts, and to the progress of hatred, but that which closes the lives, or at least the intercourse of the parties."

From these remarks it may be inferred that Dr. Paley and Soame Jennings entertained opinions concerning the doctrine of non-resistance not materially different from those expressed in these Letters. (See *Christian Evidences*, Chapter on the Morality of the Gospel.)

If, my dear sir, I have dwelt longer on this subject than may appear necessary, my apology is, that I apprehend this doctrine to be very generally misunderstood; and I consider right views concerning it, as of the highest moment in the present discussion.

There is one species of evidence bearing directly on the question of the lawfulness of war, which Mr. S. and the advocates for defensive warfare (mentioned in Letters VII. and VIII.) have passed over in perfect silence,—this is Prophecy. Their silence

seems difficult to be accounted for, as prophecy may be considered a test not only of Christian doctrines, but of Christianity itself; for to it the apostles, and also our Lord himself, frequently appeal for the truth of what they taught. I have elsewhere briefly noticed this, and I propose now to offer a few additional remarks.

Although we are not fully informed of the particular circumstances under which the various prophecies of the Old and New Testaments were delivered, and of the events to which they relate; we may conclude, that they all originated in the wisdom, the goodness, and the mercy of God: and that, like all the inspired writings, the prophecies are to be considered as "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" and, consequently, that they ought so to be received by us. If we duly consider those prophecies which relate to the advent of our Saviour, and the circumstances attending that advent; we shall have abundant cause to admire the wisdom and goodness of God, towards a world immersed in vice and sensuality, in thus preparing the minds of men for the reception of the Messiah, and a more perfect religion.

Though a long night of mental and gross darkness has, for many centuries, nearly covered the earth, and men have been rivalling the brute creation in murdering and destroying each other; yet, for our assurance that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the true Messiah, the Prince of Peace, God has graciously given us prophecies predicting a great



apostasy from the humane religion of his Son. He has, in the abundance of his mercy, done more than this. He has told us, not in figurative or symbolical language, admitting of a variety of explanations; but in terms that cannot be misunderstood, that (notwithstanding this apostasy) a time of great light and happiness is yet to take place, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord;" and when men are to cease from learning war.

The general use that commentators have made of the prophecies, is, to apply them as evidences of the truth of Christianity. This is, no doubt, highly important; but it happens that the prophecies to which I have so often alluded (*viz.* Isaiah ii. and Micah iv.), so far from answering the purpose of commentators, by showing that Jesus was the promised Messiah, on the evidence of history, they bear a contrary testimony. These prophecies are uniformly appealed to by Jews and unbelievers, to prove that the religion taught by Jesus could not be the religion pointed out by prophecy, on the sure principle that a tree is known by its fruit. This argument it seems difficult to rebut; for to tell unbelievers that the reason why Christians continue to practise war, is because the spirit of Christianity has not yet exerted its proper influence over the minds of those who profess it,—to tell this, I say, to Jews or Pagans, is little likely to recommend the religion of Christ to them. Will they not naturally retort; "We will wait till we see you influenced by this religion, which it seems you yourselves do

not believe in, or you would no doubt practise it\*.”

Dr. Priestley, in his Letters to the Jews, and Mr. Faber, in a Sermon preached at St. Paul's, before the Society for converting the Jews to Christianity, have quoted these prophecies, and have founded arguments upon them to induce the Jews to embrace their religion. When the admirers of Mr. Faber and of Dr. Priestley can show, by the *practice* of Christians, that they do indeed believe the *Gospel of Peace*, their arguments will apply : and they may have ground to expect the conversion, not only of the Jews, but of all the nations of the earth, to true Christianity ; to Christianity which will be most certainly known by its fruits. Then will it appear that the true use of these prophecies is, that they may be “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Taken as *prophe-tic history*, they are, as already observed, at variance with real history, and, consequently, militate against our religion ; and belligerent nations would do well

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\* See Letter from a Jew, p. 119, 120.

Mr. Faber, in his Preface to his *Dissertation on the Prophecies*, lays it down as a rule for interpreting them, “To allow no interpretation of a prophecy to be valid, except the prophecy agree in every particular with the event to which it is supposed to relate.” Now it is evident that these prophecies, so far from *agreeing* with the event to which they relate *in every particular*, are *in every particular at variance* with Church history ; and the writer of the above Letter is borne out in his conclusions by the canon of Mr. F. There appears to be no alternative to the inquirer after truth, but to suppose, either that the Messiah is not yet come into the world, or that nations professing to be his subjects have thrown off their allegiance to him.

to consider whether, in the present state of Christianity, they act wisely in sending out missionaries to make converts. Do we not want missionaries at home? And ought not our Church missionaries to ask themselves the question, whether the *Gospel of Peace* is preached in their own country?

Taken as commands or admonitions, these prophecies appear to throw light on the precepts taught by Christ, already alluded to; at least, they seem to be in strict accordance with them. To tell men not to resist evil, and to submit patiently to injuries and insults, appears to be equivalent to telling them to beat their swords into ploughshares, and to cease to learn war. If we believe God, the giver of all prophecy, to be a good and gracious being, we must necessarily consider these prophecies as given for wise and benevolent purposes. Keeping this in view, and considering the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, as plainly pointed out in these prophecies, we can hardly receive them in any other light than as divine commands or admonitions, perfectly harmonizing with the precepts inculcated by our Saviour. If these remarks are just, I think they afford irrefragable proof that the limitation of the precept "Resist not evil," proposed by Mr. S., is altogether inadmissible.

As our Lord and his apostles were in the constant habit of appealing to the prophecies of the Old Testament, I think I may, without presumption, recommend to Mr. S., and all who, like him, may write in favour of *defensive* war, the advice of St. Peter, who says: "We have a sure word of pro-



phesy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts ; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved of the Holy Ghost."

That God acted upon a wise and merciful principle in giving to mankind the knowledge of future events, might be shown in various prophecies of the Old Testament : I shall, however, confine myself to those which relate to the appearance of the Messiah. Graciously forewarned by prophecy, the minds of the Jews were prepared to expect him. In this was evinced the wisdom, as well as the goodness of God. The exercise of the same divine attributes are apparent at the present period. Enlightened by "the day-star of prophecy," the best commentators on these sacred writings lead us to hope that, at no very remote period of time, the Christian religion, which during so many ages has been in abeyance, or obscured and disgraced by the ignorance, the vice, and the sanguinary character of a large portion of its professors, will be restored to its pristine excellence, and will become universal ; that it will put an end to the reign of antichrist, and regenerate the whole world, causing men to beat their swords into ploughshares, and to cease learning war. Although graciously forewarned by prophecy, although experiencing the calamities arising out of a long and sanguinary war, and threatened with evils incalcu-

lable from other wars,—still nations and individuals, like Gallio, seem “to care for none of these things,” or to ask themselves the all-important question, “*Is war lawful?*”

If the Jews, who had the light of prophecy and the evidence of the miraculous powers bestowed on Jesus, were signally punished for rejecting him; if they, on this account, remain in their present degraded state,—can Christians hope to go unpunished? Christians, who have not only the day-star of prophecy, but the glorious hopes of a resurrection from the dead! Can they who, notwithstanding the joy that is set before them, rival tigers and wolves in murdering each other,—can they hope for the favour and approbation of a just and a good God?

This Letter has arrived at a length which I did not anticipate when I began it; and as I find there are other matters closely connected with the subject of the unlawfulness of war to be considered, I must trespass further upon your patience.

I remain, &c.

## LETTER XV.

### THE SUBJECT OF THE UNLAWFULNESS OF WAR &c. CONCLUDED.

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"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might : let not the rich man glory in his riches."—  
*Jer. ix. 23.*

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MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING, I trust, shown in my last Letter, that certain of our Lord's precepts, and particularly that of "Resist not evil," are not to be received with the limitations proposed by Mr. Sheppard, it will follow, that his conclusions respecting the duty of private Christians engaging in war (being founded on these limitations) will be erroneous. This being the main question discussed in the *Inquiry*, which I proposed to examine, I shall decline offering any remarks on the other parts of Mr. S.'s work, which may be considered rather of a political, than a religious nature. In adopting this line of conduct, I think I am justified by Mr. S. himself. At page 21, he very properly says : "Professing, as we do, to believe in the divine authority of these precepts, it is evidently our duty to judge conscientiously of their meaning, extent, and relation to our own circumstances ; and,



when we have done this, unreservedly to obey them." If I have succeeded, and shown that the grand fortress of Mr. S. is untenable, I need not take up your time or my own, by attacking his outworks. I however consider the whole of the *Inquiry* as every way deserving of attention.

If I may be permitted to offer an opinion concerning the source of the error of Mr. S., (if he be in error,) it is excess of patriotism; and this will probably secure to him a larger portion of approbation than of censure. That many of the vices which prevail in the world arise from the excess or abuse of certain virtues, is a truth generally admitted. Thus œconomy carried to excess, degenerates into avarice; generosity into extravagance; religious zeal into fanaticism. All these are intrinsically good, and consonant to the precepts of Christ; but, when carried to excess, they cease to be Christian virtues, and become destructive of public and private happiness.

These remarks apply with great force to the virtue of patriotism; which, instead of promoting the peace of mankind, has, from not being tempered by the spirit of Christianity, produced confusion and bloodshed. When patriotism attempts to establish the prosperity or independence of one nation at the expense of another, it cannot be too much deprecated, as a sure source of war. If I rightly understand the subject, some of our enlightened statesmen have of late honourably employed themselves in counteracting the effects of this kind of patriotism, by removing those restrictions on trade, which found

the prosperity of one country on the ruin of another ; and which, instead of leading to friendship between nations, have hitherto been productive of jealousy and hatred. However this may be, this virtue, so highly extolled by statesmen, by orators, and poets, derives little support from the religion of Christ. Speaking of this virtue, Bishop Watson says, that

“Christianity, in its regards, steps beyond the bounds of national advantage, in quest of universal good ; it does not encourage patriotism in opposition to general benignity ; or prompt to love our country at the expense of our integrity ; or allow us to indulge our passions to the detriment of thousands. It looks upon all the human race as children of the same Father, and wishes them equal blessings ; in ordering us to do good, to love as brethren, to forgive injuries, and to study peace, it quite annihilates the disposition for martial glory, and utterly debases the pomp of war.”

I am induced to make these remarks, from a suspicion that the benevolent author of the *Inquiry* has unconsciously, in what he has written, been biassed not only by national patriotism and political expedience ; but I even think that a portion of the *heroic* spirit, however little he may be aware of it, is discernible in him. For such a remark, it is proper that I should assign a reason.

At page 140, Mr. S. quotes, and, I conclude, with sentiments of approbation, the following passage from a Sermon, preached in 1816 by Dr. Chalmers : “Such are the mighty resources of defensive war, that though the whole transportable force of Europe were landed upon our borders, the result of the experiment would be such that it would never

be repeated ; the rallying population of Britain would sweep them all from the face of its territory, and a whole myriad of invaders would melt away under the power of such a government as ours, trenched behind the loyalty of her defenders, and strong, as she deserves to be, in the love and confidence of all her children."

Whether these remarks are dictated in that spirit of meekness which our Lord would have approved, or whether they would have called forth the reproof addressed to his disciples, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," I leave to the admirers of Dr. C. to decide. Remarks like these, from a highly-gifted and popular preacher, are greatly to be deprecated. They have a direct tendency to foster a warlike and heroic spirit ; and, consequently, are opposed to that spirit of meekness and humility taught and practised by Christ. Though these remarks of Dr. C. may assimilate with the views of the patriot ; yet it will, I think, be very difficult to make them harmonize with the spirit of that heavenly charity, which "suffereth long and is kind ; which vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up." And are not such boastings to be greatly deprecated for their folly ? For what folly can be more evident than to suppose that the thousands of armed men of Britain could vanquish, if landed on their territory, the millions of armed men of Europe ? May I be permitted to offer to Dr. C. and those who approve this kind of boasting, which cannot give security or elevate us in the estimation of foreigners, the advice contained in my motto to this Letter ; "Let not the



wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might."

After the most diligent and impartial consideration I am able to give to this interesting subject, there does not appear to be any safe halting-place of *limited military service*, at which, according to Mr. S., a Christian may take his station. To speak of fighting Christians, appears to be as great a contradiction, as to speak of believing infidels, or Christian pagans. On the subject of the non-resistance of evils, the prominent doctrine of Christianity, its professors may learn wisdom from a nation regarded as barbarous.

"Whilst the Romans carried on war against the Volsci, they made themselves masters, not only of the field of battle, but of the enemy's camp. Among the prisoners were discovered some Tusculans, who confessed that they had aided the Volsci, by order of the public and the authority of their magistrates. The senate, on this report, thought it necessary to declare war against Tusculum, and charged Camillus with the expedition. The Tusculans opposed the Roman army by a method that made it impossible to commit hostilities against them. When the troops entered their country, the inhabitants neither abandoned their places, nor desisted from cultivating their lands. A great number of their citizens, drest as in time of peace, came out to meet the generals. Camillus having encamped before their gates, which were open, and desiring to know whether the same tranquillity prevailed within their walls, as he found in the country, he entered the city. All the houses and shops were open, and all the artificers were intent upon their trades; the schools resounded with the voices of children at their books; the streets were full of people going backwards and forwards on business, without any signs of terror, or even amazement;

and not the least trace of war was to be seen. Every thing was tranquil and pacific. Camillus, surprised at such a sight, and overcome by the enemy's patience, caused the assembly to be summoned by the magistrates. 'Tusculans,' said he, 'you are the only people who till now have found out the true arms and forces capable of securing them against the Romans.'" (*Doddridge's Works*, vol. v. p. 282, Note by Dr. Williams.)

We have one proof, but I grieve to say only one, of Christians, upon an extensive scale, acting upon similar principles. When William Penn and his peaceful followers first settled themselves in Pennsylvania, instead of building a fort and establishing a military force for their protection, agreeably to the general custom of Europeans, they entirely divested themselves of all warlike instruments, whether for offence or defence. Though they were surrounded by tribes of Indians of a warlike and ferocious character, and who were in the habit of visiting other European settlers with destruction and death, yet William Penn and his men of peace dwelt among them in security, without sword or gun,—bolt or lock. Mr. Clarkson says, "Whatever the quarrels of the Pennsylvanian Indians were with others, they uniformly respected, and held as it were sacred, the territories of William Penn."—"The Pennsylvanians," says Oldmixon, "never lost man, woman, or child, which neither the colony of Maryland, nor that of Virginia could say, no more than the great colony of New England."

Although many instances might here be adduced, of smaller bodies of men, and of individuals, placing

implicit reliance on the providence of God, having been delivered in cases of great danger; yet, it may also be remarked, that to such facts may be opposed others, where men, placing their trust in God, instead of being thus delivered, have been exposed to every species of suffering, and even to death itself. This was the case with the Society of Friends at their first rise; and this, to their great disgrace, among Protestants: it was the case with the Protestants themselves at the time of the Reformation: it was the case with the early Christian Martyrs: it was the case with our Lord and his Apostles. In adverting to the preceding historical facts, I am therefore far from wishing you to infer that I imagine that an implicit trust in God, and a patient acquiescence in the arbitrary proceedings of those in power, will uniformly secure to us indemnity from suffering. This would be to expect what is contrary to daily experience, and to indulge in visionary hopes: hopes which, instead of being sanctioned, are condemned by our religion. This would be to expect our reward in this world, instead of looking forward to it in the next.

Though the facts which have been stated may not prove that God, at all times, delivers those who trust in him in cases of imminent peril; yet they plainly show that he frequently, and under very unpromising appearances, protects those who rely on him: they also exhibit, in a very striking point of view, the surprising effect that the non-resistance of evil has in subduing angry and revengeful feelings, even in minds the most savage and un-



tutored. Though relying on this principle may not, in all cases, secure men from violence, yet it will be found, on the aggregate, like all the principles and precepts delivered by our Lord, to be the very best to promote our temporal interests. Our religion, however, so far from promising worldly prosperity, as the reward of our obedience, teaches us that suffering is the appointed path to moral perfection. That it is, in the established course of the divine government, necessary to the formation of exalted virtue, we must conclude, from God making “the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings\*.”

Before I dismiss the subject of the unlawfulness of all war, it is proper that I should answer a question you have asked, and which has repeatedly been asked me; and with a kind of triumph, as if it were perfectly unanswerable. The question is this: “What would you do in case a robber, probably an assassin, were to break into your house? Would you not, if possessed of arms, shoot such a one, as the best means of preserving not only your own life and property, but the lives of your wife, your children, and domestics?” In the way this question, this *argumentum ad hominem*, is put, I confess to you I feel some difficulty in giving it a direct answer. Perhaps it would be best for me to say, that I do not know how I should act in such an extreme case, never having experienced it. Should you ask me what, in such a situation, a Christian ought to do, I should feel less difficulty in answering you. If he

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\* Heb. ii. 10.

were possessed of Christian courage, and that sublime charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things, and which never faileth;" if, I say, he were imbued with this sublime and Christian virtue, the true believer, even in this perilous and trying situation, would refrain from shedding a brother's blood.

If the view I have taken of the precept "Resist not evil," be a just one, the man who should thus act, would simply obey this precept of our Lord; he would, for his consolation and encouragement, have the high honour of acting as Jesus did, in a situation of similar difficulty. He would also act in obedience to the sixth commandment, which our Saviour has left in full force. And we must bear in mind that "he came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil," or establish them.

One very general objection to the doctrine of non-resistance is, that it is unnatural; and that self-defence is one of the first principles implanted by the great Creator, not only in man, but in the whole animal creation. The question for the consideration of a Christian is, not what the laws of nature seem to permit, but what the laws of God actually command. And I would ask of you, whether one great purpose of the Gospel is not to enable its professors to overcome those evil propensities, which, whether natural, or acquired by habit or education, tend to make men unhappy here, and to unfit them for a state of superior happiness hereafter. To say that any action is lawful, because it is natural, is a conclusion that Christianity does not sanction; and the assertion ought to excite suspicion and in-



quiry. There are many propensities of a sensual nature, which are equally as natural to us as the principle of self-defence, which no well-informed Christian will think of defending. To admit the principle of self-defence, or to allow the limitation of Mr. S. to the precept "Resist not evil," appears to rob the Gospel of one of its *peculiar doctrines*, and of its *original morality*; and merely to adopt a plan already recommended by many of the sages of antiquity; a plan of *common-place morality*, which, instead of allaying jealousy and the angry passions, is likely to keep them in continual action. Of this kind the system of Mr. S. appears to be. To act upon it, and endeavour to be merciful as God is merciful, seems to be as impossible as it is to serve two masters.

Another objection to the doctrine of non-resistance is, that, though it might be very safe and proper for individuals to adopt it, it would be ruinous for nations; that their enemies, taking advantage of their simplicity, would make them "*hewers of wood and drawers of water*." This apprehension appears to arise out of a practical disbelief of the superintending providence of God, and from men entertaining wrong views of the paternal character of the Deity, and of their duty to each other as brethren. Nations, with great complacency, admit that the wise Creator is capable of ruling in heaven; but, from their conduct, they seem to think that they are much more competent to form laws for the government of this lower world, than those which he has graciously given us. The great misfortune is, that men think themselves of too much consequence; and, intent upon reforming nations, they neglect or



overlook their own reformation. The question for the consideration of individuals is, what the revealed will of God requires of them in their capacity of private Christians; and having ascertained this, which is no very difficult task, to pursue the path of duty through good report and evil report, regardless of personal advantages or disadvantages. When individuals shall thus act, the road to national reformation will become easy and bloodless; and the path to universal and permanent peace direct and certain.

It may be highly important, not only to individuals, but to legislators, and to ministers of the Gospel, to examine whether this principle of self-defence, so natural to animals, and so zealously contended for by men, is not the probable cause of a very large portion of the barbarous murders that disgrace Christian nations. Is it not to save his life? Is it not on this very principle of self-defence, this natural principle, that the robber is converted into the assassin? It may also be justly questioned whether, in most cases, forbearance is not more likely than resistance, to save life.

Were it possible to imagine that there could be found a grave lawyer, or legislator, deeply read in the *statutes at large*, but entirely uninformed concerning the jurisprudence contained in the Old and New Testaments; such a one, if such a one could be found, being led to look upon Christianity as it is technically said to be *part and parcel* of our laws, would naturally expect to find in our Scriptures, that house-breaking, horse-stealing, poaching, &c. &c. would be treated as deserving of the highest

penalty of the law. With what astonishment would such a one read the following: "If a thief be found breaking up, and he be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him: for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall (*not be hung by the neck till he is dead, but*) RESTORE DOUBLE\*." What would the Jewish legislator, were he now to appear, say to our sanguinary code, to our spring-guns, men-traps, and instruments of human destruction? When we consider the lenity of the Jewish laws, and that the crime of murder was then of rare occurrence, may we not conclude that the great severity of modern laws, instead of checking, incites to crime, and blunts those sensibilities which God has mercifully planted in the human breast. When Legislators make so light of shedding human blood, can we wonder at the frequent occurrence of murder and assassination? But the Jewish laws were the laws of God; modern laws are merely human laws; and many of them are neither *part nor parcel* of Christianity.

And now, my dear Sir, having answered your question, permit me to ask you one in return. Should *you* ever be placed in the trying situation of having a robber, perhaps an assassin, breaking into your house, what would you, as a minister of the Gospel of Peace, do? Looking up to Jesus as your guide

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\* Exod. xxii. 2—4.



and pattern, and endeavouring to regulate your actions by the same benevolent spirit which governed him;—could you, as his disciple, think yourself justified in taking away the life of a brother? Should you, however, thus situated, and sanctioned by the laws of your country, have sent your brother unprepared into his Maker's presence; would the recollection afford you pleasure or pain, when you approach that crisis to which you and I are fast hastening? Is it not likely, when summoned from this world, you would wish that Christian forbearance had triumphed over worldly caution; that you had acted upon the principles that our Saviour taught and exemplified; that you had afforded your brother the opportunity of repentance; and that you had, a few years sooner, died a Christian martyr.

If there is any thing of fanaticism, or of zeal without knowledge, in thus receiving the precept "Resist not evil," I entreat you to point it out to me. For my own part, after bestowing much and patient consideration on the question, I perceive nothing fanatical, nothing unreasonable, in receiving and acting upon this precept to the extent I have mentioned. The conduct recommended, seems to be the natural consequence of faith; of faith of the most simple and obvious kind; viz. a faith that teaches "that God is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him\*."

The soldier, when ordered on the forlorn hope, impelled either by the sense of military duty, or the fear of punishment, or by the hope of the praise of

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\* Heb. xii. 6.



his fellow-creatures, or the dread of their censure, meets death without flinching.—The Christian, conscious that the eye of God is ever upon him, instead of sacrificing the life of another to save his own, with heroism awaits a death which seems unavoidable. Which, I beseech you, is chargeable with fanaticism? He who sacrifices his life to the bubble called honour, and to his duty to man? or he who loses his life, from a sense of duty to that Being, who can and will reward him,—he who loseth his life in order that he may find it?

The question of the lawfulness, or the unlawfulness of war, or of the profession of arms, is a question exclusively religious; and in determining it, worldly policy and expedience ought to be banished from the counsels of the individual. He is to obey God rather than man. I am painfully aware that the cause I have advocated, though sanctioned by the Gospel of Peace, is a very unpopular one; but cheered by the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus\*, I have persevered in writing these Letters, in the sure and certain hope that the principles they defend, will ultimately become as extensive as Christianity itself, and useful (if not to the present) to future generations.

The hero and the statesman may yet, for ages to come, triumph over Christianity, over humanity, and over peace. The wise man may still continue to glory in his wisdom, the mighty man in his might, and the rich man in his riches; but let the Christian bear in mind, that “the wisdom of the world

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\* Rev. xix. 10.

is foolishness with God," and that, as in the propagation of the Gospel, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," so it is probable that he will, by the same means, restore it to its pristine purity and energy over the human mind. For his consolation, the advocate for peace knows, on evidence as sure as that on which Christianity is established, that the folly of the present belligerent and inhuman system will be made manifest by that "knowledge of the Lord," of which the whole earth shall be full. And though the time may be distant, he is assured that God "shall judge among the nations; and shall work conviction in many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Though no one now living may hope to see the accomplishment of this prophecy, yet the duties it imposes are imperative on all who believe in its truth. And though they may not experience the happiness arising out of this new state of things, this new creation, they may anticipate the more substantial bliss promised by our Saviour, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

AFTER publishing my "Letter to the King," it seemed incumbent upon me, in the very peculiar and insulated situation in which that Letter placed me, to show to the world by further discussion, that in withdrawing myself from the profession of arms, I had not only acted according to the dictates of



conscience, but that I had also been guided by sound principles of religion and morality; that I was not an enthusiast, but that I had studied the sacred word of truth, had regulated my conduct by it, and had, as I professed, "spoken forth the words of truth and soberness:" that, weighing the interests of a future life against those of the present, I had not acted unwisely in preferring the former. It also appeared incumbent upon me, in discharging what I considered a positive duty, that I should not only use great plainness of speech, but that I should cautiously avoid giving offence to any one; so as to give my arguments a fair chance of being examined with the calmness and impartiality the subject deserves. That I should, in such an undertaking, succeed, or escape all blame, is more than I could reasonably hope; but not dreading undeserved censure, nor looking for applause, I have persevered in writing these Letters, and have accomplished my task to the best of my abilities. I have now only to implore the Giver of all good,—the "God of Peace,"—to bestow his blessing on my humble endeavours, believing them calculated to increase the happiness of his rational creatures, and consequently the glory of the Creator.

I am as sensible as you, or any one can be, that the matter these Letters contain might have been better arranged, and the arguments used more skillfully and forcibly urged; but I have done my best in advocating a cause, on which not only the prosperity, but even the existence of our country as a great nation, in no small degree, depends: for this religion is intrinsically a religion of peace; it is



called "the Gospel of Peace;" it was established by the "Prince of Peace;" it is destined by the great Ruler of the universe to "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea;" and along with "glory to God in the highest," to establish "peace on earth and good-will among men."

The progress of this religion, and the establishment of peace, have long been impeded by the unworthy conduct, and the erroneous opinions, of its professors. Expedience has by them been substituted for obedience; and subservient as the authorized teachers of religion have long been to belligerent princes, Christianity cannot long remain stationary. Either the savage system of deliberate murder by wholesale, or Christianity itself, must be given up. For the Christian's consolation, prophecy, which shines through the present darkness, assures him that Christianity will be triumphant; that men "will beat their swords into ploughshares;" that they shall cease to learn war, and that "the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ."

The signs of the times also afford consolation to the Christian. The present rapid increase of science and knowledge affords better grounds of hope than our forefathers could reasonably entertain, that "the knowledge of the Lord (or *Christianity*) will *finally* cover the earth." Christianity, when the handmaid of power and associated with ignorance, if it has not produced, has failed to destroy, superstition, slavery, war, and innumerable evils resulting therefrom; and the world continues, as in the darkest ages, an *Aceldama*; and the conversion of Jews,

Mohammedans, and Pagans, is yet to effect. When Christianity shall become associated with science and knowledge, we may rationally anticipate the reverse ; and that sound religion will be the parent of peace, safety, and liberty ; that, in the language of the Psalmist, "righteousness and peace will kiss each other ;" and that the Christian graces of long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, will extinguish the heroic spirit,—will banish war from the face of the earth, and, rendering the spread of Christianity certain and rapid, will hasten that period when "they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid ; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it." Such, on the highest evidence, are to be the glorious triumphs of knowledge over ignorance, of truth over error, of faith over unbelief, of humanity over cruelty, of the meek and forbearing over the martial and heroic spirit, of Christianity over every obstacle.

As we are led to believe that the Christian revelation, as it is the most perfect, will also be the last that will be granted to mankind, we may therefore conclude that the triumphs I have enumerated will, as has been already observed, be achieved by human agency in the ordinary course of God's providence. This consideration ought to stimulate all good men, and particularly Christian ministers, to "labour for peace." What particular nation, or what class of persons, will have the honour of being selected as labourers in this glorious cause, we are not informed. Whether those who proclaim to the world that "it is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment



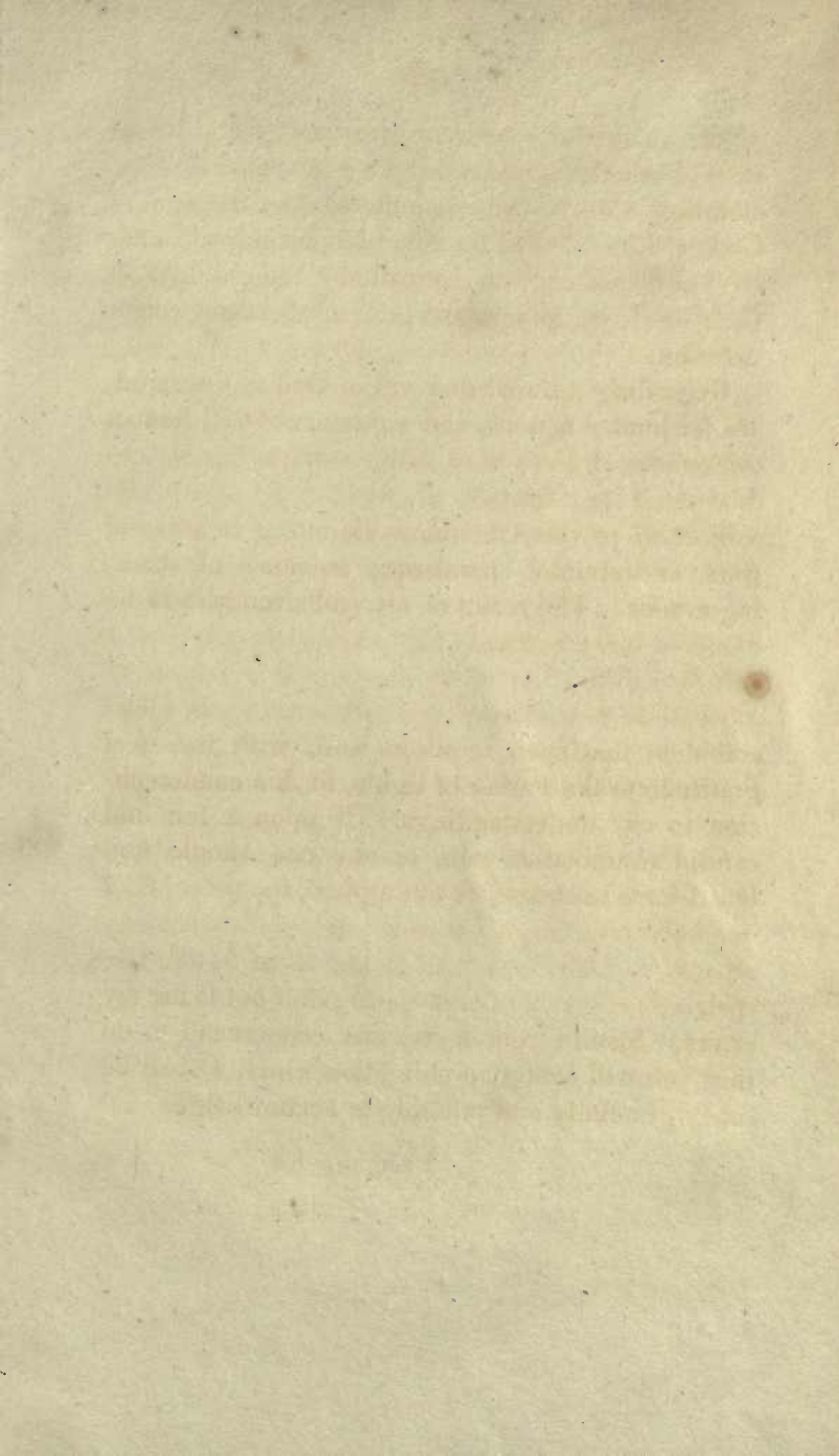
of the magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in wars ;" whether you, and those who make this declaration, a declaration unauthorized by the word of God, will be selected for this "labour of love," and, as "peacemakers," to be called "the children of God,"—I leave to your and their most serious consideration.

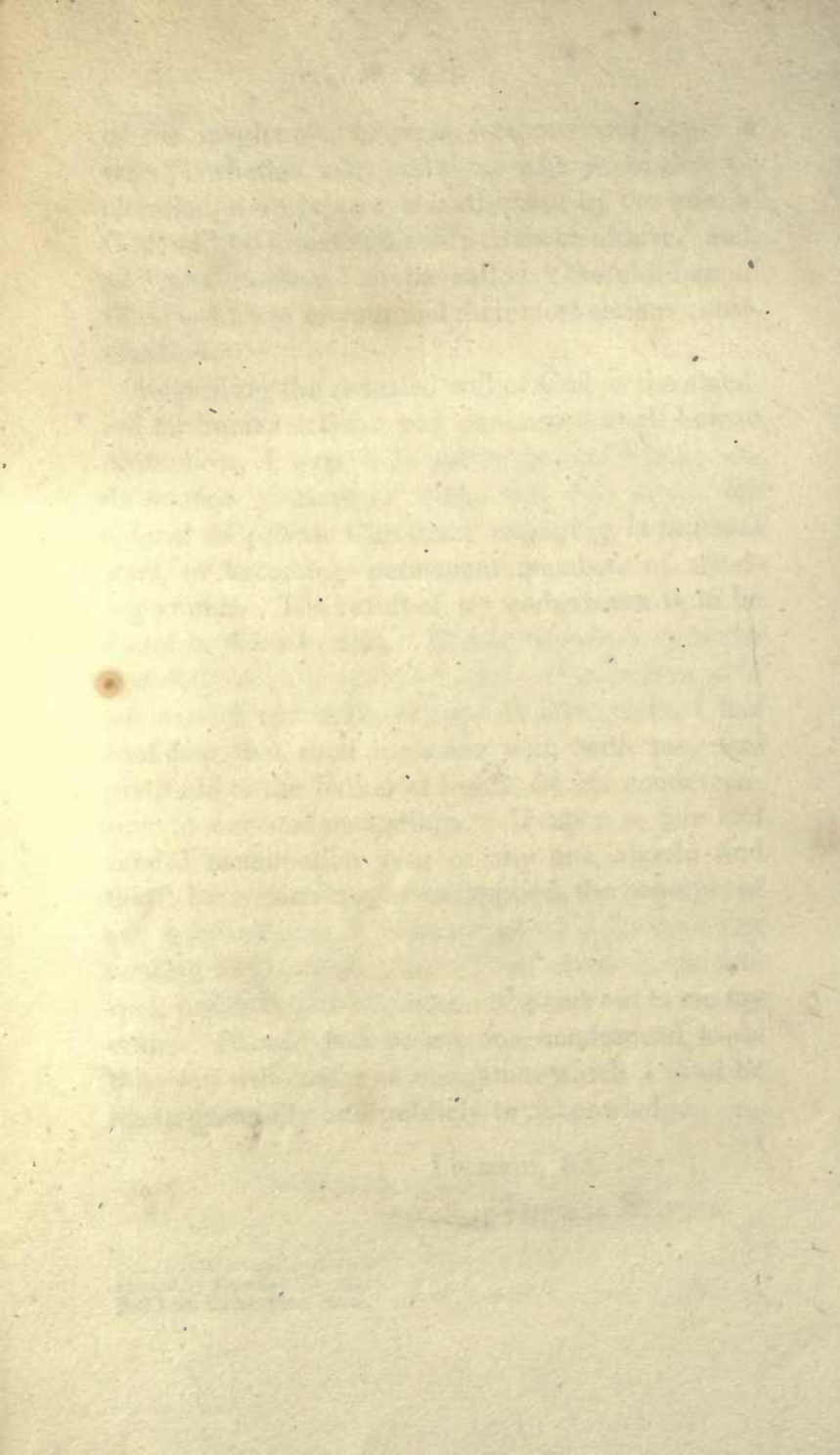
Regarding the revealed will of God as the standard for human actions, and paramount to all human ordinances, I have with diligence and fidelity endeavoured to ascertain what this will is on the subject of private Christians engaging in national wars, or becoming permanent members of standing armies. The result of my endeavours is to be found in these Letters. If they contain any truths that may have escaped the observation of you, or of any candid and diligent inquirer after truth, I feel confident that such inquirers will, with me, feel gratitude to the Father of lights, for his condescension to our understandings. If upon a fair and candid examination you, or any one, should find that I have mistaken, or misapplied, the precepts of our holy religion, I beseech you,—I beseech my readers, as Christians, and in the spirit of the Gospel, which is that of peace,—to point out to me my errors. Should you, or any one, condescend to do this, you will confer an obligation which I shall be ready gratefully and publicly to acknowledge.

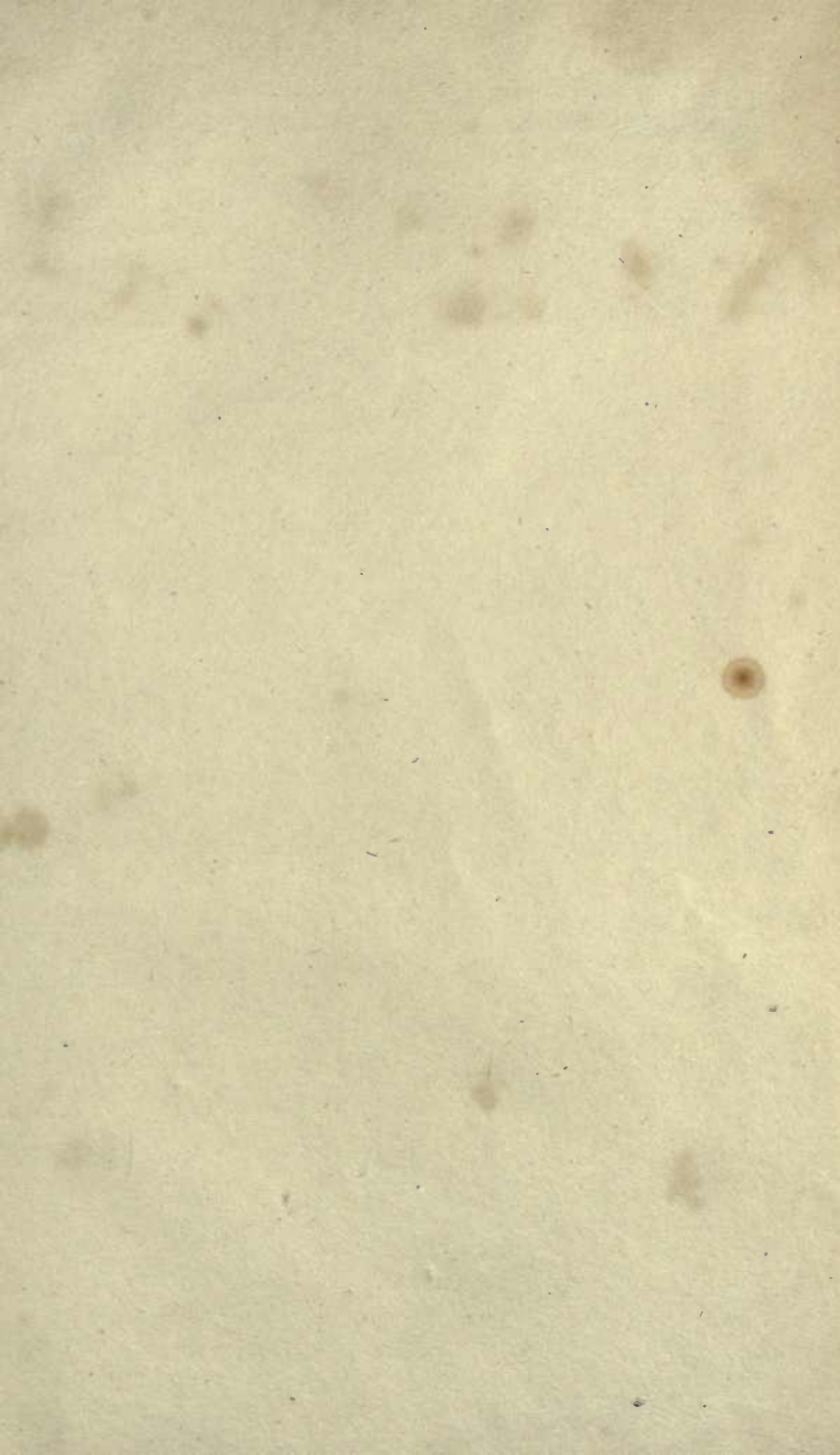
I remain, &c.

THOMAS THRUSH.













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